

**ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
CENTRE FOR DYSLEXIA AWARENESS—TEACHER TRAINING
FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES/DYSLEXIA**

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**EVALUATION REPORT FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
INTER-AMERICAN AGENCY FOR COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (IACD)**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

AB

Antigua and Barbuda

ABCDA

Antigua and Barbuda Centre for Dyslexia Awareness

ABUT

Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers

Activity

The tasks that must be carried out in order to produce the outputs of a project

Beneficiary

End-user or participant of the Centre for Dyslexia Awareness Project

CIDI

The Inter-American Council for Integral Development

DLTP

Disability/Dyslexia Literacy Training Project (Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia)

DYSLEXIA

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability in the area of reading and writing. The term is derived from the Greek word "dys" (meaning poor or inadequate) and "lexis" (words or language).
- Dyslexia is a specific difficulty in learning to read that cannot be attributed to other factors such as low intelligence, physical disabilities such as poor vision or hearing, lack of knowledge of English, or lack of exposure to printed material. It is neurologically based.
- Dyslexia is primarily caused by difficulties in processing the component sounds of oral language. The technical term for this difficulty is difficulty in processing phonological information. Dyslexic children have difficulty learning to decode and spell words.

EFA

Education for All

FEMCIDI

Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development

GAB

Government of Antigua and Barbuda

Goal

A statement of how the project or program will contribute to the solution of the problem of the sector

IACD

Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development

MOE

Ministry of Education

NGDO

Nongovernmental Development Organization

NSDP

National Strategic Development Plan (of AB)

OAS

Organization of American States

OECS

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States

ONE

Oficina Nacional de Enlace

National Liaison Office

Output

This is the set of goods, services and training the project has to complete; it is « work completed » such as « people trained ».

Participant

End user or beneficiary of the DLTP

PSMP

Public Sector Modernization Program (of AB)

SLD

Specific Learning Difficulties

SUP

Service Utilization Plan

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

PROJECT SUBMITTED BY	ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA			
PROJECT COORDINATORS	Paula Francis Spencer, Hyacinth Rose-Manners, and Nicolette Doherty (
NATURE OF THE PROJECT	National			
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES	Antigua and Barbuda			
AMOUNT REQUESTED	2002: \$95,872 2003: \$96,600 Total: \$192,472			
AMOUNT APPROVED	2002: \$ 50,000 2003: \$ 94,523 Total: \$144,523			
PROGRAMED EXECUTION DATE	January, 2003 - December 2004			
EFFECTIVE EXECUTION DATE	February 2003 - June 2005			
B. Project Assessment	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
1. Project Relevance			X	
2. Project Effectiveness			X	
3. Project Efficiency		X		
4. Project Sustainability			X	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Special education needs in the area of specific reading literacy disabilities and difficulties, such as those exhibited with dyslexia, have been underserved in Antigua and Barbuda. In an effort to redress this situation on the island, the Antigua and Barbuda Centre for Dyslexia Awareness (ABCDA), a non-governmental development organization, characterized as a charity, through the government of Antigua and Barbuda, proposed the Antigua & Barbuda Centre for Dyslexia Awareness—Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia project, referred to hereafter as the ABCDA-DLTP, or simply the DLTP.

2. The initiative to increase appropriate special education skills by training teachers to cope with the problem provides the context and the subject matter of this evaluation report.

3. The purpose of this evaluation report is to provide the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) and member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) with an evaluation of the performance of the Project entitled “Centre for Dyslexia Awareness—Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia”. The DLTP evaluation is intended to help the member states and the IACD (1) to achieve better performance and results in the delivery of technical cooperation and program/project implementation; (2) to fully understand the context in which projects are implemented in order to consider recommendations, best practices and (3) to assist in the design and execution of future FEMCIDI funded programs.

4. The rationale for this Project stems from Antigua’s findings of poor literacy among primary and post-primary students in the twin-island nation and few, if any interventions to assist the student population that suffers from learning disabilities, such as Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies, that affect literacy.

By providing (1) **knowledge** about Dyslexia and (2) access to **skills** training for teachers, the DLTP Project is relevant because it focuses on acknowledging that Dyslexia exists as a condition in AB, on raising awareness about the condition and on meeting children’s literacy needs.

By increasing knowledge and special education skills of teachers in AB the project seeks to deal with and overcome the following constraints in Antigua and Barbuda:

- Limited knowledge about Dyslexia
- Limited possibilities for access to special education skills training for literacy problems such as Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies;
- Limited possibilities for students to increase coping skills without training of teachers in special education areas;

- Insignificant participation and short vision in State education activities and policies in the specific area of special education;
- Policies that do not fully translate the needs of literacy poor students in Antigua and Barbuda.

5. The Project to impart knowledge and provide technical skills to teachers to cope with Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in Antigua and Barbuda took place over a period of three years from January 2003 to the end of June 2005, at the request of the government of Antigua and Barbuda.

Project title. The project, as designed, used the project title, “Antigua-Barbuda Centre for Dyslexia Awareness—Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia”. This title is somewhat vague since the project has more components than teacher training. In general, this capacity building project, in the special education sector, has a training component and a learning one. Specifically, the project aimed to (1) impart knowledge about Dyslexia by providing teachers with training in technical skills (to administer and interpret assessment tests given to students with observed literacy problems and be able to plan literacy programs); and (2) better understand and disseminate information about Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies.

While these may be semantic fine points, project titles are an important introduction to the substantive issue or areas the project intends to cover in its planning and implementation. Does the project focus on dyslexia and dyslexic students only or other learning disabilities as well? A more specific title might have been “Centre for Dyslexia Awareness— Teacher Training to Build Capacity to Understand and Cope with Dyslexia and Dyslexic Tendencies”.

During interviews with teachers and the project coordinator the evaluator learned that the project also addressed so-called “dyslexic tendencies”. No reference is made to “dyslexic tendencies” in the original project document nor was there any specific formal definition offered from teachers during in-country interviews. The evaluator was made to understand that dyslexic tendencies are conditions that in some way hinder literacy mastery. To include this concept, which became an area to be covered in the skills training, baseline data must be more accurate before the project is implemented.

It should be noted that the project, as designed, states a list of goals and objectives to be accomplished. Goals are typically stated by programs or projects in broad terms and reflect how the project will contribute to the solution of the problem.

Based on field research through interviews in AB carried out by the evaluator, there are two basic goals in the project:

a. The main goal of the DLTP is to improve teachers’ knowledge and their capacity with skills to address Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies in the primary and post-primary school population.

b. **A second goal** is to also increase awareness in the general population about this particular learning disability and the nature of associated literacy problems.

Please see the original set of goals and objectives, as stated in the original project design in **Annex II**.

Because the original project design lists a long menu of goals, it is fair to say that the project proponents lost sight of the meaning of “goal”. Such an approach makes it difficult to assess the scope of the project.

This convoluted approach to “goal setting” in the design of the project may lend itself to inefficient project implementation and may dilute the effectiveness of a project because proponents “go after” less-focused or misconceived outcomes. Such an approach may be driven by a project proponent’s lack of knowledge about how to establish goals or the understated hope that such a long list of country or project aspirations may meet OAS criteria that fetches approval and thus, gets more project funding.

It is helpful to note that for subsequent evaluation purposes, these broad goals must be translated into concrete statements that specify the condition to be addressed together with one or more measurable criteria of success that contributes to the solution of the problem. More needs assessment of the real problem is required alongside more focus to avoid a laundry list of goals and presumed outcomes.

Similarly there are many objectives the project proponents listed in the original design (Annex IB). Objectives are usually targets that enable goals to be attained. Too many objectives often run astray of specific goals.

6. **The purpose**, i.e., the result expected at the end of the execution period that provides a solution to the problem, is to have a national Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia program which will enhance and support the educational infrastructure in Antigua and Barbuda and raise literacy standards in schools and society as a whole.

In order to meet the goals of improving teachers’ knowledge about Dyslexia and their technical capacity to cope with its prevalence in AB, the specific **objectives**¹ of the DLTP are:

- a. To facilitate the transfer of specific knowledge about Dyslexia to primary and secondary school teachers;
- b. To increase the number of skills teachers have for them to administer and methodologically interpret tests for Dyslexia;

¹ Objectives are specific targets in the project that will enable goals to be achieved.

- c. To increase teachers' capacity to plan literacy programs in AB;
- d. To become a clearing house of information and resource center regarding specific learning disabilities such as Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies

7. **The specific activities to achieve the aforementioned objectives are:**

- a. Identify an accredited distance learning training course in Dyslexia in the United Kingdom
- b. Train teachers in Dyslexia test-giving, screening and assessment techniques
- c. Plan workshops and awareness seminars for the benefit of teachers and the general public.

As observed by the consultant, in keeping with the project's goals and objectives, the Project **accomplished its planned activities and produced the following outputs or "work completed"**:

- a. Provided a two-year (Diploma) distance training course in Dyslexia and Literacy comprising a one year part time course leading to Certificate Level followed by a Second year part time Diploma course which will be run concurrently with a second Year 1 Certificate Level course. This course was the first of its kind in AB.
- b. Trained primary and secondary school teachers
- c. Set up a resource center as a self sustaining clearinghouse of information. For example, the Centre managed to establish its own tutoring program; it convenes parents and teachers to discuss issues in special education.
- d. Promoted awareness of specific literacy problems in the general public. For example, parents and school administrators became more aware of Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies because of interaction with newly skilled teachers.

8. This three (3) year training project was originally budgeted at \$263,322.72. Of this amount \$71,628 was counterpart funds. The original amount requested was scaled down by approximately 50 per cent and thus entailed scaling down of the original expenses. Final funding for the project consisted of \$144,523 provided by the OAS plus counterpart funds².

It should be noted that receipt of funds from the OAS and the dates stipulated for training by the London-based Dyslexia Institute did not tally. This "disconnect" in no way affected the effectiveness or efficiency of the training program.

² Per information received from Cecily Norris

9. The social value of this Project is that it provided an opportunity to access skills training to cover, hitherto unmet special education needs in literacy in AB.

Furthermore, people's perception of literacy failure caused them to seek help from the Centre (parents, teachers and caregivers), including adults who had been searching for answers about their own difficulties.

10. The domestic institutions and organizations that **worked in partnership** with the ABCDA include (1) The Ministry of Education (2) public and private schools and (3) The Antigua and Barbuda University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies.

The Caribbean Dyslexia Institute, the British Overseas Institute, the US Peace Corps and the Challenges World Wide Volunteers made informational, technical and administrative contributions to the implementation of this project. The project demonstrated excellent inter-institutional cooperation.

11. Resources were used **efficiently** in that:

- a. The project's target population consisted of generalist teachers
- b. The service providers constituted a group of specialist educators
- c. Workshops for parents and school principals were given
- d. Student screenings were carried out

12. Resources were inefficiently or poorly used in that:

- a. The project's manager carried out the overwhelming bulk of project coordination alone without additional professional staff to assist her.

13. As found by the consultant when in Antigua, the project was **effective** because for the first time in Antigua and Barbuda teachers were given access to a skills-specific training program that enabled them to build capacity to increase their effectiveness in the classroom by more adequately coping with Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies exhibited in students.

14. One of the most salient **best practices** of the DLTP is its distance learning methodology coupled with face-to-face training sessions and practical application sessions through tutorials for the affected population.

The practice of including Management as a part of an ongoing project as a beneficiary is laudable because it increases the institutional capacity and establishes useful feedback loops of information for project implementation improvements (monitoring) during the course of the project.

15. Other **Best practices** included:

- a. Project document based on adequate understanding of problem; knowledge of country needs and possible solutions;

- b. Specifically targeted and exclusively selected teacher population
- c. Inter-institutional cooperation; participative among beneficiaries and between national and international institutions;
- d. Networks and interdependencies formed; ample interactivity based on tutorials
- e. Conducted in a non-authoritarian environment with problem specific goals that feed national development objectives

16. There were no significant impediments that in any way incapacitated implementation of the Project, despite poor project management due to understaffing. Please refer to section 3.6, difficulties/shortcomings, in the body of the text for more details.

17. Sustainability

- a. Strong inter-institutional cooperation shores up sustainability for total project completion
- b. Less dependence on one source of financing increases long-term sustainability of project results
- c. Training trainers ensures more lasting results

18. Recommendations include:

To the OAS

- a. Improve Project Proposal Document
 - Project design: Care should be taken to clarify and distinguish project goals (generally more general outcomes), project objectives (generally more specific targets, project indicators and project methodology in the proposal questionnaire format so that proponent countries have a clear understanding of the differences and in that regard, clearly delineate project processes (methodology or strategy to achieve a specific objective), and project goals.
 - Instead of a questionnaire, project proponents might do well to understand the elements of and criteria for good proposal writing
 - Data and information must be of appropriate quantity and quality to project. Country needs to know its baseline conditions, that is, where it stands currently in relation to given project expectations, projected outcomes and potential impact.
- b. Improve Project Updates by Monitoring
 - Develop a regular project status-reporting format and frequency that meets needs of donor organization and member countries. By developing a monitoring function, irrespective of the monetary size of the project,

regular feedback about how the program/project is doing is available and project coordinators can take corrective action when and where appropriate.

- c. Conduct readiness assessment as a diagnostic tool – *ex ante evaluation*
 - Before project execution, assess where a country's implementing/executing organization stands in relation to a number of critical factors –including organizational roles, responsibilities, and capabilities; incentives for and demands of the project and human resources to shore up implementation efforts; ability of an organization to sustain the project load as a team effort.
- d. Undertake Capacity building for increased efficiency
 - Review implementing organization's capacity along the following dimensions: technical skills; managerial skills; existence of data systems and institutional experience ---to implement and monitor project as it unfolds.
 - Help identify gaps in capacity needed to build and sustain project results in the country
- e. Ensure and monitor OAS country office involvement in project cycle by establishing ongoing communication flows
 - Train the OAS country office Director on project monitoring
 - Instruct country office staff to report on organizational *ex-ante* project capability as well as project evaluability
 - Instruct country office staff to be in contact with project proponents during project execution

To Antigua and Barbuda ABCDA

- a. Increased human resources for organizational support
 - Paid professional staff and more interaction of Executive Board to avoid one-person management regimes and foster less cumbersome project management. This should include:
 - a small project team that includes Executive Board members
 - sector specialists and
 - at least one member from the MOE
 - More rigorous involvement and monitoring by the OAS national office representative so project coordinators know rapidly and as fully as possible about potential project glitches in project implementation activities as designed so that variations can be accounted for and changes can be made as soon as possible.

- Increased involvement of OAS national office, the MOE and Project Coordinator are necessary for continuous information on project process and to ensure backstopping mechanisms be put in place and used, where necessary.
- b. Increased inter-institutional collaboration
- Collaboration and cross-financing between sectors of government, business and civil society must be considered for project sustainability and future support.
- c. Review course content for second phase
- This project needs to add a math literacy component (based on parents' request and island-wide needs) and train trainers to continue to train education practitioners in reading and math literacy.
19. Continued support is recommended given the following rationale:
- a. This project has met an immediate need in AB and serves as a beacon of progress in the area of special education needs to pick up government slack, especially with regards to dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in the general primary and post-primary student population.
- b. This project has the potential to replicate itself in the OECS and in so doing, strengthen technical expertise in special education and political ties in the Eastern Caribbean.

1. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

1.1 Objective of the Evaluation

This evaluation is that of a social project with specific training. The purpose of this evaluation report is to provide the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) and member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) with an evaluation of the performance of the Project entitled Antigua & Barbuda – Centre for Dyslexia Awareness—Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia, henceforth called the “Dyslexia Literacy Training Project” (DLTP).

The DLTP evaluation is intended to help the member states and the IACD (1) to achieve better performance and results in the delivery of technical cooperation and program/project implementation; (2) to fully understand the context in which projects are implemented in order to consider recommendations, best practices and (3) to assist in the design and execution of future IACD-funded programs.

The report will focus on the essential element of the Project’s execution, namely the activity of the DLTP, i.e. the training of teachers to increase the technical skills set they have. It is expected that the teacher training will result in more professionals who are skilled enough to provide appropriate methodologies to effectively address dyslexics and other reading disabled people. To this end, the report overview and findings will analyze (1) the context within which the project was carried out, (2) the institutional framework within which the project was carried out, (3) the scope of training content and participation, (4) the selected experiences of participants as recipients of project service, (5) the outputs and outcomes of said training and (6) the lessons learned from the project.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to determine the relevance, the developmental efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the sustainability of results achieved in the DLTP. In addition, the evaluation will attempt to extract valuable lessons and best practices that will be applied to improve the design, assessment and implementation of future FEMCIDI financed projects. By specifically identifying lessons learned, underscoring best practices and drawing conclusions we hope to emphasize those elements of the teacher training process that contribute to long-term development objectives of the IACD and OAS member countries. Recommendations will be elaborated where appropriate.

The aim of this evaluation report is to learn from the DLTP’s specific training content and methodology in order to outline the value it adds to providing social benefits in special education to participants, individually and to the country, in general.

1.2 Methodology of the Evaluation

The consultant gathered information and data about the project from a wide array of sources during the evaluation and used activity-based methodologies to conduct the evaluation. The methodology of this inquiry consisted of general information gathering techniques and specific field-based consultation techniques. Details of the methodology used can be found in Annex I.

The inquiry methods used are based partly on (1) the study of secondary sources and partly on (2) semi-structured interviews of informants from state and civil society organizations in Washington, DC and Antigua & Barbuda.

First, the report is based on documents from the OAS/IACD offices in Washington, DC such as project proposals and project mid-term and final reports from the implementing agency. The questionnaires prepared by the consultant were also taken into account.

Questionnaires, 1 and 2, can be found in **Annex III** and **IV**, respectively.

Second, participatory inquiry methods were used as part of the technique to get information and understand the motivation and perceptions of the stakeholders in this project to provide courses and training to teachers who are currently involved with students who need technical methods to cope with or overcome reading deficiencies.

The informal interviews in the field during the evaluation mission to St. John's Antigua guide the report's case histories concerning the project's participating country.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: ANTIGUA & BARBUDA CENTRE FOR DYSLEXIA AWARENESS – TEACHER TRAINING FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES/DYSLEXIA

2.1 Project Goals and Objectives

Based on field research in AB carried out by the evaluator, the **goals** of the DLTP are twofold:

- a. The main goal of the DLTP is to improve teachers' knowledge and their technical capacity with skills to address Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies in the primary and post-primary school population.
- b. A second goal is to also increase awareness in the general population about this particular learning disability and the nature of associated literacy problems.

On the assumption that (1) there are general short and specific long-term social and economic gains associated with teaching education practitioners --- such

as teachers (including regular, resource and support teachers) and other stakeholders such as parents and school administrators --- skills and methodologies in the area of special education; that (2) all people, especially children with specific learning disabilities, will benefit from trained teachers who enable them to acquire increased skills and opportunities for life-long learning and productive activity and, (3) society in general, will reap benefits from a population with increased skills, the project to provide Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia took place over a period of two years from January 15 2003 to June 2005, at the request of the government of Antigua and Barbuda.

With the plethora of project goals as noted in Annex II, it is fair to say that the project proponents are either unclear about their goals or are possibly overambitious in addressing all the outstanding literacy needs in the special education sector in AB, especially as they relate to addressing Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies that affect literacy on the islands. Upon closer interpretation by the evaluator, the information provided in the project document and acquired during in-country interviews with the project coordinator, the current president of the ABCDA, it comes to light that the list of four goals and six objectives in Annex II are a laundry list of "desiderata". Such lists make no attempt to prioritize what is needed nor do they consolidate a strategy to pursue.

According to the ABCDA's president, the purpose of the project, i.e., the result expected at the end of the execution period that provides a solution to the problem, is to have a national Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia program which will enhance and support the educational infrastructure in Antigua and Barbuda and raise literacy standards in schools and society as a whole. This project is quite capable of achieving such a purpose because the ABCDA managed to enhance its own institutional capability by involving the ABCDA Education Program Coordinator who received training provided by the project and in so doing, made way for the further development and expansion of the present Centre to accommodate a program.

The evaluator perceived shortcomings in the original project design. The following **Table I** clarifies DLTP project goals, objectives, activities and outputs of this project according to the in-country ex-post evaluation:

Table I

DLTP Project Goals, Objectives, Activities and Outputs

Goals	Objectives	Activities	Outputs
1. To improve teachers' knowledge and	1.1. Facilitate the transfer of specific knowledge about	Identified an accredited distance	A two-year distance training course in Dyslexia

Goals	Objectives	Activities	Outputs
their technical capacity to address Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies in the primary and post-primary school population	Dyslexia to primary and post primary school teachers	learning training course in Dyslexia from the United Kingdom	and Literacy
	1.2. Increase the number of technical skills teachers have to administer and methodologically interpret tests for Dyslexia	Trained teachers in Dyslexia test-giving, screening and assessment techniques	Newly trained school teachers
	1.3. Increase teachers' capacity to plan literacy programs in AB	Carried out practical literacy tutorial sessions	New skills for affected children
2. To increase awareness in the general population about this particular learning disability and the nature of associated literacy problems	2.1 Become a resource center and clearing house of information regarding specific learning disabilities such as Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies	2.1 Planned Dyslexia workshops, campaigns and awareness seminars for the benefit of ABCDA President, teachers and the general public	ABCDA expansion to act as a resource center and self sustaining clearinghouse of information Awareness of specific literacy problems Interaction between teachers and parents

2.2 Project Structure and its Target Population

2.2.1 Project Institutional Structure

The institutional structure of the DLTP devolves from the Antigua and Barbuda Centre for Dyslexia Awareness, an educational Charity, registered under the laws of Antigua and Barbuda. The organization was founded in November 2000 to train teachers, to teach people with dyslexia, to provide facilities for the testing and assessment of dyslexics, to provide support and assistance to dyslexic persons and their families and to raise awareness generally with regard to dyslexia.

From the general membership, several committees have been formed including an Education Committee comprising 20 members, most of whom are involved in education. Expert and professional personnel drawn from this committee in particular play an important role in the management and co-ordination of the DLTP project.

The Executive Committee had overall responsibility for the administration of the project and the approved funds. Additional administrative support to the organization comes from Peace Corps and Challenger World Wide volunteers.

The structure of this project also enjoys other national and international organizations' support. Nationally, both the Ministry of Education and the Antigua and Barbuda University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies contributed technical support while public and private schools, on the primary and secondary levels, offered some measure of collaboration. The international institutions that provided technical support include the British Executive Services Overseas and the Peace Corps while The Dyslexia Institute of London and The Caribbean Dyslexia Centre, in Barbados provided informational support to the project.

2.2.2 The Dyslexia Training Project Structure

The structure of the DLTP is based on a two year training course that is broken down into two achievements: a one year part-time Certificate course and a two year part-time Diploma course. The Diploma course can only be initiated after a screening process and a jury of evaluators approves the aspiring student and only after the Certificate course has been completed by the prospective student.

The courses are based on the provision of workshops, seminars and campaigns as well as on a practicum for teachers-in-training that involves one-on-one "tutorials" for students who are affected with a learning disability that affects their literacy.³ The tutorials represent hands on, supervised practical teaching-practice sessions.

The DLTP training structure is depicted in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2
Dyslexia Training Project Structure

Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy 1 year	Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy 1 year
Workshops, Seminars, Awareness-raising campaigns	

³ The courses do not include any math literacy components, at this writing.

Teachers' supervised practice sessions as tutorials for affected persons

The training course content is based on specific modules that comprise the provision of theoretical information, specific skills-teaching and training sessions, and supervised individual tutorials for students who have been reported to have a difficulty. A detailed description of the training and its academic content will be covered in section 2.4 "Activities of the Program".

2.2.3 Target population

The project document clearly indicates that the target population for this specialized training were teachers, all of whose specialized training through the project was not yet completed at the time of the in-country evaluation. These teachers, of varying degrees of post-secondary education work in both the primary and post primary public and private schools, though they are not special education teachers. Teachers who possess a teacher training Certificate endorsed by the University of the West Indies were selected to be trained, of which four of had at least a first degree. In addition to the teachers, and as stated in the project proposal, the direct beneficiaries of the project include the persons with learning disabilities who will be able to integrate more effectively in the educational system as a result of the programme, and the parents of the students, while the ultimate beneficiaries of the project will be the society at large as the results of the project improve the nation's ability to raise literacy standards in schools and within the general society.

In the case of this group of teachers, it is important to note their common characteristics. First, they have no specialized skills to deal with learning disabilities or difficulties such as Dyslexia. Second, they are all part of the same selection process to be trained in technical skills.

As was explained by the president of the ABCDA, the selection process for this direct target population was based on advertisements in the media and in schools through the Ministry of Education. Applicants were asked to collect and fill out relevant forms and to submit an accompanying rationale for wanting to do the course. An ABCDA selection committee then reviewed the applications and short-listed individuals. Each person was then invited to an interview. Following this exercise the final applicants were selected.

2.3 Outputs of the Project

According to the design of the project, as stated in the original project document, the outputs (i.e. the goods and services of the DLTP) are:

- Certificates
- Diplomas
- Private teaching
- Awareness raising campaigns⁴

Outputs are supposed to mirror the progress of the project. It should be noted that the project document incorrectly states its activities as outputs. The project's expected output is the result of its completed activity. To this end, the project's investment in the area of special education training for Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies, provided by distance learning, is expected (1) to produce more capable, technically-skilled teachers who will apply their new skills in their job and be in a potential position to improve their teaching methodology in AB as well as (2) serve as resource persons and counselors who promote special education practices and pro-active involvement with a broad range of stakeholders to further develop insights in the area of Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in AB.

It is important to understand that **new knowledge and technical skills are "goods"** that are expected to be produced from this investment choice the resources of which (both physical in the form of physical facilities and human, in the form of instructors) have been allocated to special education training provided for the teachers who participate in this project.

Furthermore, as stated in the project document, workshops and awareness raising campaigns, activities to be carried out as part of this project's set of structured activities, will produce another output: **enhanced human capital and an increased number of informed citizens in AB** who are directly involved with special education needs and can potentially support the (expanded) ABCDA's goal to serve as a resource center.

It must be pointed out that the project design provided no baseline information regarding teachers' or citizens' knowledge or skills sets about Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies before the project got underway. For example, no baseline surveys were administered to know what specific knowledge parents directly involved with affected children knew before interacting with trained teachers. Similarly, the project design has no measurable indicators to measure "increased knowledge", "skills" or any (more) cognitive understanding gained by teachers or parents.

The following **Table 3** delineates general quantitative and qualitative outputs. According to evaluation findings there is no numerical data available at this writing.

Table 3

⁴ These outputs are quoted from the document submitted by the project proponents: Format for Presentation of Partnership for Development Proposals, p.4

Quantitative Outputs	Qualitative Outputs
Awareness raising campaigns	<u>New knowledge and increased awareness</u> of literacy and numeracy skills deficits
Trained teachers More technical skills	<u>Understanding</u> how to cope with specific learning difficulties
Enhanced human capital i.e., more informed citizens in AB Expanded capacity of ABCDA	<u>Representation</u> of sectoral interests with special sensitivity, awareness and understanding of skills needed in special education to overcome student learning difficulties

2.4 Activities of the Project

The activities proposed in the project design are specific to the aforementioned outputs. These activities, as listed in the project document, comprise specific tasks that are expected to make the project outputs achievable.

Activity 1: Selection and Introductory Training

Activity set 1

Inter-institutional coordination and networking

- Select participants: Sixteen participants are selected to participate in the course and attended the introductory sessions.
- Meet with the Minister of Education: The Executive Committee meets with the Minister of Education in March 2003 to inform him of the course and his contributions as a local counterpart. The Ministry of Education grants the ABCDA a building for current headquarters and excused participants from their teaching responsibilities in order for them to participate in the introductory sessions.
- Conduct a 2-day introductory workshop at the commencement of the Certificate program: A one-day workshop was held from 9 am to 4 pm at the Technical and Vocational Training Centre, in St. John's on June 2, 2003.

Participants, Ministry of Education officials, ABCDA executive members and the media attend.

- Speakers are invited to discuss the importance of the course in the development of programs for students with special needs and the training of teachers in dyslexia and literacy.
- During the workshop participants meet with course facilitators, receive their course materials, a description of course requirements and the

course schedule.

Activity 2: Prepare and Commence Training activities

Activity set 2

Inter-institutional coordination; resource and capacity building

- Order training materials: Materials are ordered by the Dyslexia Institute of the United Kingdom (UK) and shipped to the ABCDA to constitute a library and/or student materials.
- Order equipment: Six computers and one printer are ordered from Antigua Computer Technology (ACT) in St. John's, Antigua to be installed and networked in the ABCDA office for participants and tutored students.
- Continue workshop and conferences: Two week workshop in July 2003, during which participants learn techniques for screening children at-risk for dyslexia.
- Commence the Certificate and Diploma course training: Annex VI contain the course transcripts.

Activity 3: Publicity and Awareness Raising Campaigns

Activity set 3

Dissemination of information and inter-institutional participation

- Implement a series of TV and radio programs
- Provide free counseling services for families of dyslexics
- Publish brochures/leaflets and other educational materials for dissemination to the general public
- Conduct workshops and seminars for the general public: A facilitator from the UK conducts a one-day workshop for 22 school principals to inform them how to make their classrooms "dyslexia friendly". A worksheet packet entitled "Making Your School Dyslexia Friendly; Building Success in the Classroom" is distributed.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Description of the National Situation in which Evaluation Takes Place

Situational Backdrop

The twin island state of Antigua and Barbuda is part of the Leeward Islands in the North Eastern Caribbean. The country consists of a number of islands, of which Antigua is the largest one and the most populated. Barbuda, just north of Antigua is the other main island. The state is 442km and has a population of approximately 74,000 persons scattered in six political divisions called parishes. Antigua and Barbuda is a multi-party democracy whose gross domestic product (GDP) depends heavily on the tourist sector. For example, the contribution of

Tourism to the economy is estimated to be about 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁵ While tourism is the most important economic activity in AB, the financial service sector is considered the main area of diversification in the country's effort to reduce over-reliance on the tourism sector.

Antigua and Barbuda is a small, open economy, susceptible to exogenous shocks such as hurricanes.⁶ Despite this vulnerability as a small-island state, the UNDP's Human Development Report of 1998 ranked the country as 37 among 174 countries based on adult literacy, school enrolment, life expectancy at birth and per capita GDP. The country has the highest index of human development in the OECS but it is still plagued by the existence of social deficiencies and gaps as seen in its significant levels of poverty, quoted at 12% in the European Union's country strategy paper of 2002.⁷

It is important to note that for the period 1998-2000, the GAB enunciated important strategies and policies for the country. These include two processes intended to enhance development: the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the Public Sector Modernization Programme (PSMP). One of the critical components in the PSMP, pertinent to this evaluation, is education.

To that end, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda attaches much importance to education's role in boosting the social and economic development of the country. In this regard, from 1992 to 1997, education's share of the national budget remained relatively stable in a range between 9.45% and 10.40% of the total recurrent expenditure. It should be noted that this modest allocation of national recurrent expenditure was attributable to a downturn in the performance of the economy and deterioration in public finances which precipitated under-financing of the education and training sector. This decline in the economy meant a reduction in funds allocated to education which led to the introduction of an Education Levy in January 1995. Funds from this levy are used to augment the flow of funds from the Central Government Budget to the Education Sector.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda, desirous of maintaining its standard of financing education, and wishing even to improve on its record, in 1994 constituted the Board of Education, a statutory body, to manage the Education Levy. The Board became operational in 1995 and between then and 1998 its expenditure on capital education was as follows: 20.8 million in 1995, 20 million in 1996, 21.86 million in 1997, and 27.3 million (EC\$) in 1998. These amounts are in addition to the annual expenditure by the Government's Treasury.

From 1991 – 95 the contribution in percentages by the government to the three levels of education averaged 13.2% of gross domestic product. Of the

⁵ Website: <http://www.unesco2.org>

⁶ A devastating hurricane in 195 severely affected the island and growth declined by about 4.5%. The Education Sector also suffered seriously. Many school buildings, furniture, equipment and materials were destroyed.

⁷ http://europe.eu.int/comm/development/body/csp_rsp/print/ag_csp_en.pdf

EC\$41733,630 allocated for 1994, 30.3% went to primary education, with 34.1% and 8.43% going to secondary and tertiary education respectively. The allocation for 1996 was EC\$44,035,217. Most of this money went into the payment of salaries for teachers.⁸

During the period 1997-1999, in Eastern Caribbean dollar amounts, the government spent EC\$121.1 million, while the Board of Education, spent another EC\$47.7 million on various education projects. 11.69 % of the 2001 Budget, or EC\$ 59, 853, 239 was allocated to education.

Despite the GAB's positive intentions in the field of education with injections of financial resources into the sector and the country's approximate 90 % literacy rate (indicating an education system has been reasonably successful in imparting basic skills), the achievements have been somewhat overshadowed by substantial problems from the late 1980s that dragged on into the 1990s. In the 1980s educational supplies and facilities were inadequate; in addition, there existed a high percentage of untrained teachers at all levels. These instructional deficiencies contributed to a national shortage of skilled labor.⁹ Furthermore, when the hurricane of 1995 whipped the island and growth declined by about 4.5%, the education sector was impacted negatively since a decline in the economy meant fewer funds allocated to the sector.

The aforementioned shortcomings have not eclipsed the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's general philosophy about education and its significance for the country's development. The Government strongly believes that the development of human resources is the key to national development. It has therefore mandated that schooling for its young citizens should be compulsory and free for the age group five to sixteen (5 - 16) years. To this end, and in keeping with the concept of basic education for all and that of lifelong education, opportunities are given for the sixteen plus to attend the State College, Youth Programmes and Adult and Continuing Education Programmes.

The essence of Government's Educational Policy is embodied in these words:

"The Government's Educational Policy is predicated on the philosophy that each child should first be socialised as a human being and only secondly as an economic unit of production. To this end, the education system is expected to develop creative and productive and adaptable men and women and in the process identify, nurture and cultivate as fully as possible each child's capacity, aptitude, skill and strength."¹⁰

Current situation, 2005

⁸ op cit, <http://www.unesco2.org>

⁹ <http://countrystudies.us/caribbean>

¹⁰ Op cit, <http://www.unesco2.org>

In a press release dated 13 September 2005, the current situation in AB's educational system was brought to light by the Antigua and Barbuda's Union of Teachers (ABUT). The press release highlighted the following:

"The Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers calls upon the Minister and Ministry of Education to urgently address what the Union deems as a CRISIS in our education system. The Union is appalled at the state of unpreparedness of our schools for the effective delivery of quality education at the start of the new school year.

Several critical issues are of great concern to the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers. These include:

1. The shortage of teachers which negatively impacts on the successful implementation of the curriculum.
2. The overcrowded classes which have serious implications for the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process.
3. The poor physical condition of the school plants which can adversely affect the health and safety of both staff and students.
4. The unavailability of laboratory facilities and equipment for subjects like the Sciences and Information Technology.

Whereas the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers is cognizant of the fact that the system will not be perfect, the Union is of the view that with proper planning and allocation of relevant resources, the existing situation could have been avoided.

If indeed the delivery of quality education is a priority in this nation of ours, then the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers reiterates its call on the Ministry of Education for urgent action.

Be it known, that the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers and its membership remain committed to the task of teaching and the welfare of our nation's children."¹¹

On the one hand, it is interesting to note there exists in the educational sector a checks and balances mechanism that notifies on systemic deficiencies in education in this Caribbean country. Similarly, as stated in the press release, the ABUT and its members are further concerned about the general welfare of the nation, its children and the task of teaching.

According to specialists in the ABDCA institution, "After examining the reading statistics from the Antigua and Barbuda Report on the National Reading Assessment 2000 and analyzing the reading system and the remedial methods used within the schools, it is concluded that in order to address the literacy problem in Antigua and Barbuda, a national program relating to Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia is necessary. Of the 3,182 students whose reading

¹¹ www.caribbeanteachers.com

performance was assessed in this report, only 52.2% passed. The report concluded that a large percentage of Antigua and Barbuda youth are not at the required level of reading competence, and also that there are numerous differences in literacy learning among various groups of students. "¹²

Based on the aforementioned findings that point to low levels of literacy and marginal literacy rates in AB and an analysis of international statistical studies about dyslexia, the ABCDA, with the full support of the Ministry of Education, has carried out awareness programs and in February/March 2002, offered an introductory teaching course providing special consideration to the topic of dyslexia and dyslexic pupils.

While on the one hand it is interesting to note in Antigua there is conclusive evidence supporting the existence of literacy problems, on the other, it is necessary to bear in mind, as underscored in a UNESCO document, that "very often these literacy problems are treated as a reading problem, while at the same time, there can be many underlying causes other than just a reading problem. Too often, an adequate diagnosis is lacking, hence, the strategy for a right approach is inadequate."¹³

In Antigua however, it is claimed that "remedial methods used to teach persons with Dyslexia can also be successfully applied to teaching persons with other reading difficulties, therefore a national dyslexia program would benefit a much larger section of society than those who only have Dyslexia and would therefore, raise literacy rates in the country."¹⁴ This assertion suggests that remedial reading methodologies for dyslexics can potentially net in a broader swathe of poor-literacy-affected population, therefore there is reasonable justification for a Teacher Training Project that addresses special education needs, such as literacy problems in AB. To this end, through a teacher training program and the creation of increased opportunities for inter alia, dyslexic students, a teacher training project will potentially support the creation of productive employment criteria such as enhanced reading literacy.

It is in this national context, that emphasizes education for social and economic development, points to current systemic shortcomings in education, and militates for the country's education stakeholders to redress certain educational deficits and specific learning deficiencies by targeting an appropriate training approach, that the DLTP project unfolds.

Three specific project-related aspects found in the context of this project

There are three important project-related aspects of the DLTP in Antigua and Barbuda. In addition to the historical backdrop and the more current situation in AB covered above in this section, there are some overarching aspects observed

¹²Organization of American States, Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development format for presentation of partnership for development proposals document, p.1

¹³ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001364/136466e.pdf>

¹⁴ Antigua and Barbuda, Format for Presentation of Partnership for Development Proposals, p.2

in-country. The first observation speaks to the general philosophical context in which this project was carried out in this Commonwealth Caribbean country. The second aspect underscores the importance of AB's NGDO role in catering to special education needs on the island. The third touches upon the concept covering learning problems as they relate to the DLTP.

1. Special Needs Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Most of the countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean have adopted a philosophy of "education for all" (EFA) which means they accept the principle of development for all, including children with "special needs". "Education for all" or inclusive education, appears on the one hand, to be a new educational philosophy aimed at creating an educational environment conducive to special learning needs of students in the region. On the other hand, in its implementation, it is an innovative strategy that brings many consequences to the table and has implications for the existing education structure at all educational levels.¹⁵ This educational philosophy, which aims at improving the quality of life, requires equally new ways and means to reach its goal with the objectives of correcting personal imbalances in the life of children who have a special need and sustaining positive impacts for the larger society by providing long term strategies (such as teacher education) that can cater to children who exhibit some kind of special educational need.

It is interesting to note that during an interview with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education in St. John's, when asked about a definition of "special education" in Antigua, the consultant was told there was no specific definition used island-wide under the current Administration. The Ministry, which according to the Permanent Secretary has no current strategic plan, appears to have no specific focus or concentration on special education for special needs students. With regard to this project, the use of the terms "special needs education", "disability", and "learning problem" or "learning difficulty" seem to have no current place of priority in the lexicon of the Ministry of Education's daily work.

When asked, no baseline data on children with special education needs or learning problems was provided to the consultant. When asked about specific student population surveys for the prevalence of dyslexia in their primary and post-primary levels in AB, the Permanent Secretary proffered no data. Given this circumstance, it is apt to question the extent of MOE awareness of specific learning problems associated with dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in AB.

Despite some shortcomings in the Ministry of Education, as related by the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, it cannot be said that AB looks askance at special education because in the EFA 2000 Assessment regarding Antigua and Barbuda it is reported that, "Within the context of equity of education opportunities the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's aim is to make

¹⁵ UNESCO, "Education for all in the Caribbean: Assessment 2000", Monograph Series, Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina, p.8

provisions for special educational facilities for children of exceptional ability, and those with very special needs. Presently some students are mainstreamed and teachers trained to cope in the classroom situation.”¹⁶

While the Ministry supported this project, it is not clear whether statistical information on the learning disabled/dyslexic among primary and secondary school students exists in the Ministry. The extent to which the Ministry is involved with a long term commitment to special needs education for this specific learning problem addressed by the DLTP is an outstanding question in the light of the Permanent Secretary’s dearth of statistical information and any Ministry strategy or detailed conceptual framework that speaks to special education in Antigua, particularly concerning Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies.

Although during interviews the Antiguan Ministry of Education gave no specific definition of “special needs education” nor spoke about any strategy or priority accorded the area, what is clear is that in the Commonwealth Caribbean there is thinking about general as well as new educational needs for children with some sort of learning difficulty. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago’s White Paper, produced by the National Task Force on Education as far back as 1994, there are indications that attention was being paid: “Regional Diagnostic centers are essential in order to respond to the need for specialist help in the local communities” and “The Regional Diagnostic Prescriptive Centres.... should undertake education programs for the families of children with special needs so that they can better respond to their special children.”¹⁷ It is fair to say that the implication for the Commonwealth Caribbean is students with special needs will be looked after.

In the final analysis, in the Commonwealth Caribbean countries education is considered a priority for everyone as evinced in the statement, “consensus exists with regard to the pressing need to accord priority to education, especially against the background of the uncertainties with regard to the economic future of the countries on the one hand, and the rapid economic, technological, social and political global changes on the other.”¹⁸ Evidence points to the fact that education is a driving force in the sub-region and it is meant to be provided for everyone.

Currently in Antigua, events would seem to overshadow the fact that education is a main priority or is receiving priority status in this small-island state. During the time of this in-country evaluation mission, the Minister of Education said the need to allocate funds to critical projects is one of the reasons for the reduction in monies allocated to education in the 2006 budget. It should be noted that, as reported in the daily newspaper on December 8, education received \$62,725,746, representing 9.4 per cent of the total budget or more than one

¹⁶ http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/antigua_barbuda/rapport_1.html

¹⁷ Idem, UNESCO Monograph Series, p. 27

¹⁸ Op cit, “ ” , p. 9

million less than last year.¹⁹ In AB, there is a clear, if only temporary, shift in priorities established by the MOE.

2. Antigua's Nongovernmental Organization Role

It is fair to say that in Antigua, there is an independent, somewhat more targeted approach to education and learning problems since the DLTP shores up the general Commonwealth Caribbean framework of according education a priority status for all and to that end, catering to special needs education. In that regard, it is interesting to note that notwithstanding the current state of affairs in the field of education in AB, the ABCDA is responsible for picking up some of the slack of the government sector in special needs education. The role of the ABCDA and the initiative to do so with seriousness and sustained commitment emerges from civil society, since the ABCDA is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization (NGO), characterized as a charity. This observation poses significant implications for NGO roles, relationships and capacities in the national environment of this small-island state.

First of all, the ABCDA has moved from mere delivery of services to effecting development, by way of capacity-building, as leverage in the general society. In this regard, the ABCDA has been oriented towards advocacy for special needs education by conducting awareness campaigns about special needs pupils on the island and training teachers to deal with learning problems. It has worked towards operationalizing its beliefs on the ground and in this regard, the ABCDA sees itself as a resource center.

Second, this project underscores the ABCDA's role as an intermediary in that its teacher training and awareness campaigns have established links on the community level as well as in other sectors and levels of society (such as the government, schools and the general public), providing a specific set of support services that connect these different institutions with each other and with groups who are the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project. For example, since the inception of the project, parents and teachers have been able to meet to discuss individual children's problems at the Center. This role has enabled the ABCDA to achieve its goal of serving as a resource center.

In interviews with the President of the ABCDA, the consultant also learned of the existence of a teacher as well as a parent support group that meets periodically at the ABCDA Center. In fact, two parents Support Meetings were held in June and July, 2004 to expose parents to the types of learning resources they could make and use with their children. Parents worked alongside teachers to make resources for children. This camaraderie in a teaching-learning environment underscores a sense of "ownership" by parties who have a committed interest to address the project's focus.

As a resource center, NGOs like the ABCDA sit between groups that share

¹⁹ The Daily Observer, Thursday, December 8, 2005, pp 18-19

common interests to make a change on the 'micro' level, in the life of the teacher, the child, and the parent and also, on the 'macro' level, in the larger school-zoned community and in Antiguan society as a whole. For example, teachers reported that they tutor and coach children with learning disabilities such as Dyslexia and they also reported that teachers communicate more with their principals or headmasters at their schools. The quality of the ABCDA's engagement with the various sectors and the feedback loops (with and between teachers and parents and between teachers and school principals) it has created because of the project is a key determinant of organizational legitimacy and effectiveness to deal with the problem of learning disabilities.

In conclusion membership-based organizations like the ABCDA have a *modus operandi* that goes beyond their immediate organizational and project objectives since they combine different roles, functions and levels of actions. While this is laudatory and stands out in this project, it has also created a particular set of management challenges that will be dealt with under "efficiency", in section 3.4 of this report.

3. ABCDA concepts: Dyslexia, Dyslexic tendencies, Learning disabilities and Learning difficulties

The particular systemic weakness discerned in interviews at the Ministry of Education is addressed by the DLTP. When the consultant questioned the ABCDA president about the specific "learning disability" and ABCDA findings to support the project-specific focus on dyslexia, the ABCDA President pointed out that the DLTP was designed to not only deal with dyslexic students but rather with "dyslexic tendencies" and poor literacy exhibited by Antiguan school children. Given the cries for help from parents with whom the consultant met and interviewed, the noticeable poor reading and numeracy skills and the additional academic reports of abysmal Common Entrance and CXC exam scores throughout the island reported by teachers interviewed during this visit,²⁰ the authorities at the ABCDA felt this country context warranted the special training of teachers, via a community-based project, provided by the ABCDA.

The consultant was concerned that a project of this nature did not make a clear enough distinction in the project design about the exact condition of school children and young adults for which training was needed and provided. However, in interviews with approximately 20 teachers and 20 parents a better understanding was provided for the concepts of "learning difficulty", "learning disability", and "dyslexic tendencies". Such an understanding is necessary to better ascertain the scope of the DLTP for its primary and secondary beneficiaries (teachers and students, respectfully) and to fully understand the exact nature of the training offered to meet special education needs in AB.

²⁰ The Common Entrance Exam is taken by primary school leavers at around the age of 11 in the Commonwealth Caribbean. CXC (Caribbean Examinations Council), tests students in both academic and technical/vocational subjects.

It was generally agreed during talks with the parents and teachers, for example, that “learning difficulty”, is said to be present if a child has greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children of their age.²¹ “Learning disability” exists when there is a significant discrepancy between one's ability and achievement. The term is used to refer to socio-biological conditions that affect a person's communicative capacities and potential to learn. Someone with a learning disability does not necessarily have low or high intelligence.; this individual is working far below their ability due to a processing disorder. The term includes conditions such as dyslexia.²² “Dyslexia” is a learning disability that makes reading difficult for children and adults who otherwise have the intelligence and motivation necessary to learn to read. “Dyslexic tendencies” are those characteristics that appear to put people at risk for dyslexia and reading or numeracy constraints.

According to project informants, the specific island context in which this project was carried out highlights some proportion of a student population in the regular mainstream public and private educational system that suffers from either dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies as well as other learning difficulties that have caused literacy shortcomings as well as numeracy skills deficits. Thus, the ABCDA training in the DLTP is not strictly dyslexia specific but rather more comprehensive to cover training for *inter alia*, learning difficulties that cause inadequate development of literacy.

3.2 Relevance of the Project

3.2.1 The Government's outlook

The DLTP is in keeping with the general outlook and views of the government of AB. The country report by UNESCO on AB reports that:

“The Government of Antigua and Barbuda strongly believes that the development of human resources is the key to national development. It has therefore mandated that schooling for its young citizens should be compulsory and free for the age group five to sixteen (5 - 16) years.

In keeping with the concept of basic education for all and that of lifelong education, the government's view is that, “Lifelong education encompasses formal and non-formal education and all the experiences that contribute to personal development. The goal is to equip the populace with skills that meet the demands of the ever-changing society as a result of rapid technological changes.”²³

The DLTP dovetails appropriately with the general aims of the government to ensure that Antiguanians are educated and have access to life-long training. In

²¹ www.ssc.mhie.ac.uk/viscot/gloss.html

²² en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_difficulty

²³ http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/antigua_barbuda/rapport_1.html

interviews with approximately 20 teachers at the ABCDA headquarters, the consultant learned that the teachers voluntarily chose to upgrade their ability by increasing their skills to deal with the learning difficulties they have observed in their classrooms with some of their students.

To this end, in February of 2001, the ABCDA hosted a screening training program aimed at equipping participants with skills to administer preliminary screenings for dyslexia/dyslexic tendencies. Upon completion of the training, the Center then began to offer this service to the public. In cases where a person might have been diagnosed as having literacy difficulties or dyslexic tendencies, the ABCDA was earlier very limited in providing additional services for “our clients especially that of specialist tutoring since collectively our members/teachers had very little training about Dyslexia. The OAS Project was indeed welcomed since it would provide opportunities for our goals to be realized especially in training teachers in Dyslexia and Literacy.”²⁴

3.2.2 The ABCDA’s outlook in the light of the prevalence of a problem

The following results obtained from screening tests administered by the ABCDA for dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies.

Screening Information

Table 4

Year	Females	At Risk females	Not at risk	Males	At risk males	Not at risk
2002	16	9	7	37	17	20
2003	17	15	2	33	24	9
2004	17	12	5	30	24	6
2005	9	7	2	22	16	6
Total	59	43	16	122	81	41

These results indicate that of the sets of populations screened each year, more than 50% of the total number of both males and females were “at risk” for dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies. The screening data does not show the age range of the population sets, nor does it speak to the incidence of the problem in the primary and secondary school age population according to geographic regions on the island. We can however, conclude from this data that there is a problem that has been addressed by the ABCDA’s project to train teachers.

Furthermore, in interviews with parents, all reported observing a learning difficulty in their child. Similarly, in interviews with teachers, most reported noticing learning difficulties and literacy problems in some of their students. With the corps of 25

²⁴ Antonio, Desirée, 4 October 2005, “Summary Report: ABCDA Tutoring and Screening Programmes, September 2003-June 2005, p. 1

teachers who have completed the Certificate course and 31 who are currently in the Certificate and Diploma courses at this writing, it is assumed that the ABCDA project will have reached its goal to increase the skills level of teachers who are qualified as specialist teachers and resource persons to deal with specific learning difficulties.

While there is no more scientific data about Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies or other literacy problems in AB, it is fair to say from interviews with the past and current presidents of the ABCDA that the organization deemed it absolutely necessary to follow up on parents' and teachers' concerns to take action. The organization proceeded to address the special needs of students by designing a project to offer training to generalist teachers who, voluntarily recognized their own need to upgrade their qualifications by increasing their skills and knowledge to cope with real-life classroom situations.

3.2.3 Regional and international outlook

This project has further relevance in a region that only boasts of the Caribbean Dyslexia Association and Centre in Barbados. The ABCDA is one of a kind in AB. Thus, the ABCDA represents a precedent in AB and adds value as a clearinghouse of knowledge to impart skills at home and in the region.

In conclusion, in keeping with the Organization of American States Inter-American Program on Education and CIDI's Strategic Plan 2002-2005, the DLTP project dovetails with the OAS's overall support of ongoing teacher education and training.

3.3 Effectiveness of the project

3.3.1 Making a Contribution

The project achieved what it set out to do²⁵: train teachers in technical skills and raise awareness of both teachers and the general public concerning Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies.

While credit must be given to the set of activities effectively carried out by the project, it is unfortunate that from the outset of the project and during the entire lifetime of this project no indicators were present to measure any changes in teachers' **skill** levels and dyslexics' **literacy** levels. It is undeniable that the project was effective insofar as successfully carrying out planned activities.

In the absence of indicators, the effectiveness of a project such as this one concerning learning disabilities, as indicated in the project title, "...Teacher Training for Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia", means "making a contribution

²⁵ This is another way of saying the project achieved its goals.

to improving special education conditions and resources” in AB.

As a training project in the area of special education dealing with disabilities such as Dyslexia and literacy difficulties because of dyslexic tendencies, the project was effective because it produced educational benefits for its stakeholders and the society in general.

Table 4 highlights the project’s objectives and its outputs as interpreted by the evaluator from project documents and in-country interviews.

Table 5

DLTP Project Objectives and Outputs

OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS
1. Facilitate the transfer of specific knowledge about Dyslexia	1. A two-year distance training course in Dyslexia and Literacy
2. Increase the number of technical skills teachers have to administer and methodologically interpret tests for Dyslexia	2. Newly trained school teachers
3. Increase teachers’ capacity to plan literacy programs in AB	3. New skills for affected children
4. Become a resource center and clearing house of information regarding specific learning disabilities such as Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies	4. ABCDA expansion to act as a resource center and self sustaining clearinghouse of information 5. Awareness of specific literacy problems 6. Interaction between teachers and parents

3.3.2 ABCDA Positioning

One of the goals of the DLTP was for the ABCDA to expand and become an island-wide resource center. In this regard the project was very effective in terms of positioning the ABCDA as an organization with a clear identity and role which is understood by both “insiders”, stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda and “outsiders”, people from the region who seek assistance in the area of special education needs and especially as they relate to Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies.

During the project’s cycle, brochures and newsletters were distributed at 4 local banks and to the general public throughout the week of awareness week held Nov 16th-22nd (2003). The brochures will continue to be distributed after conclusion of the project and serve as an initial introduction to ABCDA activities and services. Both brochures and newsletters were delivered to approximately 70 public and private primary and secondary schools in Antigua during the project cycle.

Because the Ministry of Education provided support by seconding a staff

member to administer the ABCDA, the ABCDA's position in the community gained more credibility as a resource center. Though the project design never mentioned strengthening institutional relations between the ABCDA and the MOE, it should be noted that a positive outcome of the secondment lead to strengthening inter-institutional cooperation between the ABCDA and the MOE. Such a relationship may be potentially important for future OAS funded projects.

Because this project was the first of its kind in Antigua and Barbuda with the support of the MOE, it is important to underscore that the ABCDA gained recognition as the national authority on Dyslexia and reading literacy. For example, as reported in the 2003 Final DLTP Report, the ABCDA houses approximately 300 learning resources consisting of games, tapes, software, children's books, teaching guides and reading programs. These materials are used in tutoring programs and for workshops further validating the project goal and making the ABCDA a clearing house of information because of the DLTP's effectiveness.

3.3.2 Enhanced teacher skills

From interviews with parents at the ABCDA Center in St. John's, the consultant learned from teachers and parents that the project achieved its goal of increasing teachers with special skills. By training at least sixteen teachers about Dyslexia the project successfully reached its main objective. At this writing, 20 other teachers have also started the Certificate course which will run concurrently with the Diploma course for those who were selected to carry on their studies at the Diploma level.

Trained teachers will also be involved in tutoring individual students who require remedial assistance. It is reasonable to say that the training has changed both the academic and professional circumstance of the selected teachers by giving them more qualifications to cope in a special needs environment in schools where they currently teach as well as enhanced their employability and alternative career-path opportunities to be employed in different schools, allied ministries or self-employed.

On the one hand, the project has been effective because AB now has more human resources that are more qualified with special skills to address special education needs for specific learning disabilities such as Dyslexia or other learning difficulties. On the other, the consultant received no information from project informants about the impact of teacher training on the ratio of affected students who have demonstrated improvements or no change at all.

To the extent that teachers selected for training can now carry out assessments, screening and interpretation of tests administered to children suspected of having learning and/or reading difficulties, the project is effective since it has, through its activities, increased both the number of teachers and in turn, teachers' knowledge and skills. As reported in Appendix IV, of the follow-up report 2003, (Table III below), course participants learned how to utilize 5 different

types of assessments and utilized them when assessing students for their coursework. All 16 teachers who completed the coursework serve as technical trainers for the ABCDA workshops held for the benefit of teachers, educational administrators, parents, and students in Antigua & Barbuda. Most teachers have continued to tutor the students they initially tutored for their course training.

In general, translating a training experience into practical learning can be quite difficult. Few people are asked to think about what they have done and what they learned from it. To this end, as reported to the consultant by teachers and parents, the project's training has been effectively put into practice and as such has enabled the ABCDA to achieve its goal of being a resource center. For instance during the course of this project, ABCDA offered a free ½ hour consultation service for parents/guardians with a certified teacher to discuss their child's academic difficulties. Since October 2003, ABCDA has provided approximately 150 free consultations for parents or guardians concerned about their child's difficulties in school.

Secondly, not only as part of the curriculum requirement as a practicum, but also as a full-fledged service, the consultant learned during interviews that the trained teachers have tutored children with reading difficulties and in some cases, currently serve as sole resource people in their schools to provide ongoing information to other staff members about the special needs associated with Dyslexia or other learning difficulties in reading. As recounted by the ABCDA President to the consultant, and anecdotally reported in the "RAP", one teacher said she no longer teaches her special needs children "willy-nilly" but rather has increased her knowledge through an additional skills set to more systematically and methodologically address the literacy needs of her children.

In this regard the project is very effective because it has heralded the start of a continuing process with a multiplier effect of learning that serves more than the initial target population: it serves children, indirect beneficiaries of this project and their parents and school authorities, tertiary indirect beneficiaries. A strong point about effectiveness that results from this project highlights that learning can be related to the actual work someone does daily. In this project for example, the learning can be stated in tangible and concrete ways such as in test assessment skills or in intangible ways, such as in perception and understanding the difficulties of the learning disabled. The expected outcome, i.e., more teachers trained with special skills to use in special education circumstances, has been achieved.

3.3.3 Indicators and the project cycle

Baseline information and indicators are important and are intended to provide a picture of the situation before project intervention. Such information describes the situation by quantifying the levels of selected indicators that can be revisited later on during project evaluation. Baseline information and measurable indicators are absent from the DLTP project design.

Comparatively speaking, what the teachers are doing differently in terms of teaching methodology and/or didactic coping skills is not addressed in any detail in the project documents. That information would have been helpful to better understand the impact of training on both the direct as well as the indirect beneficiaries, such as students.

The expected outputs of this project, i.e. more knowledge, increased skills and enhanced human capital are “goods” that were produced from this project. By successfully carrying out its activities, the project achieved its objectives as evinced in the outputs produced. Through the process of special education training or the deliberate and thoughtful use of specialized teaching and training in a two year project teachers and other stakeholders are expected to emerged with more of an understanding and increased practical skills to potentially better serve people who exhibit learning disabilities or difficulties that affect literacy in AB.

The project specifically produced three quantitative outputs:

- More specifically skilled public and private school teachers
- Increased technical skills
- An increased number of informed citizens in AB

According to the evaluator, the qualitative outputs from the DLTP include:

- Understanding specific learning problems that afflict the country’s student population
- Increased awareness of literacy and numeracy skills deficits;
- Representation of sectoral interests with special sensitivity, awareness and understanding of skills needed in special education to overcome student learning difficulties

Undoubtedly it is difficult to measure the qualitative outputs produced from the DLTP. On the other hand, the consultant believes the following indicators are examples that could have been included in the design of the project. These indicators could have potentially provided baseline data and a means to measure the outputs to compare the impact of the DLTP.

- Number of affected students as a percentage of all students at the same level
- Number of specialist teachers per 100 affected students
- Total supply and demand of special educations skills to cope with Dyslexia and dyslexia tendencies
- Number of special education teachers to deal with Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies as percentage of total number of special ed. Teachers
- Number of special educations skills programs in AB
- Salary of teachers with special education skills

3.3.4 Publicity and Awareness Raising

One of the objectives of this project aimed to “raise awareness” about specific literacy deficiencies, especially Dyslexia. To this end, the DLTP was effective in raising the awareness of secondary and tertiary beneficiaries such as school authorities and parents about how to cope with children with literacy problems associated with Dyslexia. For example, as part of the DLTP, a one day workshop was held in June 2003 for school principals on how to make their classrooms “dyslexia friendly”. The workshop was led by a facilitator from the Dyslexia Institute of the UK. A two hour workshop for parents was held in December 2003. This workshop gave parents a general overview of dyslexia, discussed parental concerns, and examined methods on how parents can assist their children. Another two hour workshop was held in February 2004 for parents and children. The workshop focused on forging a stronger support link between parent and child regarding challenges in literacy development. Topics included study and literacy skills as well as how to minimize processing difficulties for dyslexic children.

3.3.5 Project components and achievement of goals/objectives

To assess the project’s achievement over time, the following Tables II and III describe certain benchmarks that have made the DLTP an effective project in terms of target task completion. The time period covers one year of activities as reported by the ABCDA in 2003 and 2004.

Table 6
Project Activity and Achievement, 2003

PROJECT ACTIVITY 2003 Components	MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT 2003 Indicators
Implementation of 2-year Certificate or Diploma program in Dyslexia and Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-year part-time course leading to Certificate • 2-year part-time course leading to a Diploma, run simultaneously with a second 1-year Certificate course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 16 teachers completed the one-year Certificate Course in Dyslexia & Literacy, conducted by the Dyslexia Institute of the UK and validated by the University of York ❑ The Course ran from April 2003 to March 2004.
Facilitate the introduction of these techniques into school programs.	Course participants serve as ambassadors for ABCDA in schools.
Train teachers to carry out assessments, screening and testing and to advise on the use of practical resources and materials.	Teachers who completed the course are now trained to give 5 different types of assessments for students with learning difficulties.
Implement awareness raising strategies and plan workshops and awareness raising seminars for the benefit of the general public	Awareness efforts have included numerous radio and TV broadcasts, an annual Awareness Week which includes the sale of tags for visual awareness purposes.

PROJECT ACTIVITY 2003 Components	MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT 2003 Indicators
Provide a facility comprising a resource center and a library which will be used to implement teaching programs at all levels for persons with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Currently, ABCDA acquired approximately 300 learning resources consisting of games, tapes, software, children's books, teaching guides, and reading programs. ❑ ABCDA is currently runs a tutoring program for 23 students at the Centre ❑ The program is primarily 1-to-1 tutoring with 2, 1-hour weekly sessions for each student

Source: Appendix IV, Final report 2003

Table 7
Project activity and Achievement, 2004

PROJECT ACTIVITY 2004 Components	MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT 2004 Indicators
Implement a 2 year part-time Diploma Course in Dyslexia and Literacy comprising a 1-year part-time course leading to a Certificate level , followed by a 2 nd year part-time Diploma course, to run concurrently with a 2 nd Year 1 Certificate level course.	10 and 21 teachers are on track to complete the Diploma and 2 nd Certificate course by 5 March 2006
Facilitate introduction of techniques learned into school programs	Teachers engaged in part-time Diploma and Certificate courses continue to work in classrooms which facilitate the transfer of techniques learned into schools

PROJECT ACTIVITY 2004 Components	MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT 2004 Indicators
Conduct workshops to train teachers to interpret assessment reports and cater to the needs of dyslexics and students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 25 teachers are better equipped to interpret assessment and provide differentiated instruction in class rooms that cater to the needs of students with SLD/Dyslexia and other learning disabilities/difficulties. ❑ Teachers participated in a 1-week workshop to develop knowledge and skills. ❑ A training session was held to assist persons who would provide instruction for future workshops ❑ Coordinator has visited a number of schools to raise public awareness ❑ Graduates of Certificate program serve as facilitators in schools and in other service organizations
Provide a facility comprising a resource center and a library which will be used to implement teaching programs at all levels for persons with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ ABCDA increased its resource collection to approximately 500. ❑ A portable bookshelf is being acquired ❑ Information about the resources available will be disseminated to schools and to the department of Teacher Education at the Antigua State College
Provide a self-sustaining Resource Center to be used to train people in AB and resource persons in the Eastern Caribbean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Consultation with the MOE has been held to discuss the expertise of the graduates and how best to utilize them in the education system. ❑ The Center will be used as a screening venue, a place for tutorials and workshops ❑ Antigua's model potentially provides a training model for other countries in the Eastern Caribbean

Source: Appendix V, Final Report 2004

Tables 5 and 6 underscore that the project has accomplished its targets and to that end, has performed very adequately. The information in the tables however does not speak to a less visible aspect of the effectiveness of the DLTP, i.e. the strength of the training project to promote interaction between parents and newly trained teachers to discuss sensitive issues and influence attitudes and coping skills of parents whose children presented difficulties for which parents

were previously unclear about a solution. In interviews with newly trained teachers and parents the consultant was made aware that the effectiveness of the project went beyond the mechanical aspects of its training activities since it also managed to contribute to satisfying some of the island's parents' psychological needs for help.

Of course, these achievements beg the question, "so what"? The DLTP components are useful as a management tool because they are task-oriented and highlight the organization's capacity to "get things done" as designed in the project. They are less useful for evaluation purposes because, despite achievement, they provide no appropriate indicators that measure demonstrable qualitative results other than that "teachers who need training are now trained" – a circular point that provides no further information on the impact of said training on children's improved literacy. For example, what percentage of the specially trained teachers will apply how many and what new skills sets (or combinations of skills) to deal with what percentage and/or what kind of specific literacy needs of students in AB? How much of the training, in terms of teachers' influence and ability to organize as a special education teachers' group, will impact the MOE's policy and decision-making capacity of that ministry? The answers to these queries potentially provide measurable results that are absent at this writing.

3.3.6 Impact

In conclusion, the long-term "effectiveness" of the DLTP will only be able to be measured when the proposed developments of the project and the impact of the project are assessed by the coordinator and other stakeholders in AB in the future. On the assumption that (a) all the teachers selected receive their certificates and diplomas, (b) that they are employed in public and private schools in AB and incorporate test assessments, multi-sensory learning and/or other methodologies in the classroom, (c) that the addition of special needs training into the teacher training curriculum at the Antigua State College is realized, (d) that the ABCDA serves as an accessible resource center and a clearinghouse of further training and information on dyslexia and literacy problems, and an accessory to policy-making and (e) that the general public and especially the MOE, are informed about special education needs and the specific benefits of an increase in specific skills for special literacy education, then there will be (f) a measurable difference in the quality of life of the teachers of the DLTP, (g) a significant improvement (or deterioration) in people's well-being and/or a significant change in an aspect of the community of special education needs and, (h) further ABCDA ownership of the results as they serve in government/MOE decision and policy-making in special education in AB.

3.4 Efficiency

3.4.1 Management and Administrative Objectives

While the organization's effectiveness i.e., its ability to know what project tasks to do and get them done ranks high, the efficiency of the DLTP project management is poor. In repeated phone conversations with the ABCDA President, the consultant learned that far from any hierarchical management structure for the project, most of the daily project management duties and responsibilities can be attributed to one professional only. Because various aspects of project implementation have depended on the ABCDA President with the inconsistent presence of volunteers, there has been little if any delegation of duty to paid professionals for project activities. It is reasonable to say that such poor project management easily dissipates the energies of one person and calls into question the quality of the outputs.

Since there is only one professional staff member, seconded from the Ministry of Education, to manage the ABCDA and its project coordination coupled with the absence of additional paid professionals either from the MOE or civil society, it is fair to question the longevity of commitment to this project as well as the value of a compressed scheduling of logistic duties that are currently required for non-digital dissemination of information (as part of the awareness-raising campaigns).

Because of the volume of work, this egregious understaffing (a) often compromises project schedules and possibly, transparency and reporting; (b) detracts from project life-cycle learning and lessons learned for project sustainability and, (c) discourages smooth scheduling and coordination mechanisms. For example, in a progress report on activities executed in 2003, it is noted that the project calendar was originally to commence in January 2003, but delays in coordinating the Dyslexia and Literacy course with the partnering institution postponed the commencement of activities until June, 2003. According to the project's coordinator, the delays in coordinating the course was a result of the Dyslexia Institute being unable to accommodate the continuation of the project at the time, as was explained in a letter to the OAS by Janet Townsend, Head of Training, Dyslexia Institute.

Similarly, despite funds that were committed for workshops, the postponement of a workshop on 9th December 2003 (and the remaining two) was due to delays in staff member recruitment as well as the need to schedule the workshop after the annual Awareness Week which was held from the 16th-22nd November. While we are not aware of the exact reasons for the scheduling mishap, it is fair to say that one person cannot reasonably be expected "to do it all".

Despite some initial administrative difficulties along the project cycle as reported by the OAS national office director, problems were eventually ironed out. It is questionable as to whether this organizational weakness in the project's management and implementation stages is the result of the pressure for short-term visible results in order to keep stakeholders and/or donors satisfied. Many of the problems in this area can also lead to one person taking programmatic or project decisions without the possibility of consulting other professionals. In this regard, it is also important to note that according to the ABCDA's President, the Executive Board plays a less active role in the organization since Board members

are volunteers who have other competing responsibilities. These kinds of organizational liabilities decrease the opportunity for increased transparency, accountability and monitoring.

3.4.2 Project Operations and Service Delivery

The delivery of the course content for both the Certificate and the Diploma course is a combination of face-to-face and on-line distance instruction. In theory this combination is relatively flexible since it does not require the traditional in-classroom presence for working people. Distance learning students have to have discipline since they don't have a regular schedule or interactions that enforce deadlines. Most of the primary beneficiaries of this project are full-time teachers and thus, they are engaged in time consuming activities during the day. During interviews with the beneficiaries of the course, their feedback underscored that the course-load was "too much" for some students given the time prescribed or the material provided for the students. Though the exact reasons were not spelled out to the evaluator but reported in the 2004 final report in appendix V, "four of the prospective graduates did not complete the course; two had to resubmit assignments and two have been given a grade of incomplete".²⁶

While the DLTP's mode of service delivery i.e. via distance learning, is a strong way to stimulate continuous learning as well as accommodate adult professionals' real-life schedules, a shortcoming of the DLTP is the absence of any indicator in the project design as to how measure the real return of this combination of education and learning in the light of time constraints and competing interests adults necessarily have.

The choice of distance education was a strong point of the DLTP, but, it is impossible to measure the efficiency of this delivery mode other than to consider the array of topics included in the study program.

Based on the informants' information that teachers increased their skills and parents increased their knowledge and coping skills to help affected children, the DLTP created a very valuable chain of learning and sharing of experiences to address children with Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies.

3.4.3 Communication and Timing

The MOE supported this project by inter-alia, seconding one of its officials to serve as President of ABCDA and project coordinator for the DLTP. However, as reported in the follow-up report of September 2003, "the time between the Ministry's commitment and implementation of programs slowed the progress of the course commencement".²⁷ While the report gives no details as to the reasons for this timing conflict, one can assume that any attempt to increase

²⁶ Appendix IV, Follow-up Report, 2003, p. 5

²⁷ Follow-up Report 2003, Appendix IV, p. 3

communication might have contributed to saving time.

3.4.4 Monitoring function

An additional difficulty encountered during the project cycle was that the two week teacher training cycles had to be curtailed to one week since the trained professional from the United States was only available for one week. Furthermore, the Caribbean Dyslexia Association was unable to accommodate the ABCDA's request for a substitute on the dates requested. It is necessary to consider that had the project design included a rigorous monitoring timetable the project might not have suffered this weakness at the point of implementation.

Though not in the project design, the case for project monitoring is strong because it serves management needs by providing information on coverage and process and hence, feedback on whether the project is meeting specifications. In a training course to provide new skills such as the DLTP, this is particularly crucial as regards availability of trainers. It is instructive to note that a full articulation of the service utilization plan²⁸ will not only identify the junctures in the project cycle that are most critical to the project's success for its target population but will also specify desirable alternatives as a measure of efficiency. There is no indication that these monitoring indicators were used during the DLTP project cycle.

3.5 Sustainability of the Project

3.5.1 Pilot Project

In general, in AB, both teachers and parents as well as the project coordinator asserted that there is a decided literacy problem. Though the project design does not indicate the magnitude of the problem island-wide, from interviews with teachers and parents, we understand that teachers are alarmed at the generalized poor literacy of students in AB. Not only are there reading literacy difficulties, there are also math literacy problems. Because the ABCDA is the first of its kind in AB to address special education needs such as Dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the DLTP sets a precedent on the island as well as throughout the region since it has been able to effectively increase the number of teachers with specific skills to be used in special education circumstances. The DLTP provides a point of reference and to that end, the ABCDA now serves as a resource center for the MOE and other the Eastern Caribbean mini-states. For those demand-side purposes, the pilot nature of the project makes a strong case for this project to be replicated and therefore, sustained.

3.5.2 Work with Homogeneous Communities

²⁸ The service utilization plan is a detailed depiction of the sequence of events through which the target population is expected to make contact with the project, become engaged and maintain involvement through completion of intended services(Rossi, et al p.207-208)

The DLTP worked with a relatively homogeneous community of people who needed more skills to deal with people who suffer from some kind of literacy problem, especially reading literacy due to Dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies. Where target populations and communities of project stakeholders are more homogeneous, awareness-raising is easier and project sustainability is more likely. The DLTP has facilitated access to more specialized skills for special education needs and as such, has strengthened local capacity to sustain these improvements into the future in AB, if they are accompanied by financial wherewithal and the institutional will to keep the ABCDA afloat.

3.5.3 Partnerships

Partnering with time-worn sector specialists such as the United Kingdom Dyslexia Institute and the Caribbean Dyslexia Centre in Barbados promotes continuity and capacity building in AB. Partnering with the London-based Dyslexia Institute to receive distance learning to impart skills in AB established a relationship to potentially engage the UK on a regular consultancy basis in this project's future. It is fair to say that this kind of professional relationship makes a strong case for the project's sustainability.

3.5.4 Continuing Education

Ongoing transfer of teaching skills to teachers and other related professionals within Antigua and Barbuda, a long-term objective, especially if facilitated through the Antigua and Barbuda University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies, is a means to ensure sustainability of the DLTP's outputs and long-term island-wide results. At the same time, an increase in "training trainers" or teachers from the DLTP who can instruct other teachers on the island and throughout the eastern Caribbean sub-region allows for sustainability of this project.

3.5.5 Financing

When the consultant asked teachers and parents "what would sustain this project?" a consensus emerged around the need for future project financing. Resources steer organizations and in this regard, the ABCDA is no different. The President reported that to date, there is no resource mobilization strategy that has been used by the organization locally. Because the DLTP deals with special education, it is reasonable to say that how you raise resources you need and from which source, has an influence on what the organization will be able to sustain now and in the future. For example, in keeping with the MOE remit to provide education for all in AB, the ABCDA should be able to increase its claim-making by banking on the government for subsidies as a right to support the added value of social provisions and public goods in special education.

However, a word of caution is in order because resource mobilization in and of itself is not the answer to organizational sustainability. The case to be made rests on the ABCDA's performance. In its turn, maintaining the organization depends

on having a robust organization with a support structure that allows the organization to administer and manage its projects effectively and efficiently and in turn, to meet the needs of its direct and indirect beneficiaries to impact on the problem in the larger society.

In the final analysis, sustainability is more than just a question of money. Sustainability of the DLTP, by way of ongoing training for teachers and island and region-wide dissemination of information, pivots on the interplay between resources, impact and organizational regeneration. Furthermore, while not wanting to put the cart before the horse, the DLTP can potentially be significantly sustainable providing it can have an effect in terms of politics and policy because its plan of action resonates with and is sufficiently supported by, civil society.

3.6 Best Practices, Lessons learned, and Factors of Success, Difficulties

3.6.1 Best Practices

1. Specifically targeted population
 - ❑ Education practitioners, especially teachers already in public and private schools benefited from specific skills training for sector specific work.
2. Inter-institutional cooperation
 - ❑ Project support from government departments, such as the MOE, increases credibility and legitimacy of project. It also lays a foundation for increased communication for dissemination of intra-ministerial information.
3. Networks and interdependencies
 - ❑ Strong involvement of primary direct beneficiaries and secondary, indirect beneficiaries. For example, teachers, parents, students and school authorities formed stronger bonds and lines of communication regarding the purpose, the specific goals and their perceived outcomes of the DLTP.
4. Problem specific goals that facilitate national development objectives
 - ❑ Education for all, by providing continuing education for teachers with assumed long term impact of improved literacy as a special education imperative that feeds into potentially better democratic governance in AB and shores up the ability to effectively manage organizations in both the public and private sectors.

3.6.2 Lessons Learned

1. Project design

- ❑ In the DLTP there is a weak design that is strongly implemented but with little to no evident measurable results that are linked to overarching goals.
- ❑ Contingency plans. Because scheduling conflicts can arise with sector-specific technical trainers or with other unforeseen intervening variables in the project cycle, contingency plans in the project design have the merit of providing a “fall-back position” in an attempt to stay on schedule with planned activities.
- ❑ Indicators. Poor or absent quantitative or qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, make it difficult or impossible to reflect the changes connected to this intervention or help assess the performance of the initiative.
- ❑ Monitoring or “follow-up reports” sends signals that the project efforts are going off track or that some aspect of the project is amiss. Monitoring and evaluation are complementary systems that are necessary from the inception to the end of the project.

2. Inputs

- ❑ Limited human resources. Delegation of duty is impossible without cadres of paid professionals who work as a team on the project from design to implementation. Easy dissipation of energies and inefficient use of time is potentially a likely management outcome when project team is limited to one sector-specific professional.

3. Methodology

- ❑ Distance learning. While distance learning is convenient and flexible to accommodate working professionals, its requirements for feedback and discipline are less transparent.

4. Partnerships

- ❑ In an increasingly globalized world, partnerships for teaching skills, allow for sharing intellectual capital and sector-specific experiences.

3.6.3 Factors of Project Success

1. Informed stakeholders

- ❑ Awareness by parents and education practitioners of special needs requirements in special education
- ❑ Parental initiatives to move forward: parents approached ABCDA and expressed desire to have more trained specialists

2. Demand-side for NGO work

- ❑ Creation and maintenance of enabling environment for parents' initiatives to move forward

3. Tacit support is provided

- ❑ Government support to disseminate information about project
- ❑ Government support to facilitate release of primary (direct) beneficiaries, i.e. teachers to be trained
- ❑ Government support to provide physical facilities
- ❑ Government support to second MOE official to run ABCDA

4. Organizational adaptation

- ❑ Organization survives while retaining single-handed leadership to manage project

3.6.4 Difficulties

1. No organizational readiness assessment to determine organizational technical and human resource capacity to efficiently execute project
2. Poor statistical needs assessment prior to project design to design better project outcome indicators
3. Baseline information absent to better understand what drives the need for project and subsequently measure project's results through changes
4. Poor project design due to incomplete knowledge of logframe; vis-à-vis poor indicators
And contingency plans absent in project design
5. Insufficient organizational structure of executing organization
6. Timing problems during project implementation to slow down or postpone scheduled activities.

4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT

4.1 General Comments

- ❑ Using the evidence from the findings, this project is in a position to establish a formal program in AB and replicate the pilot DLTP in the OECS, bearing in mind following recommendations
- ❑ Using the reported findings can help organizational capacity building
- ❑ The current experience documents that the project can be used to record and create an institutional memory of best practices and lessons learned

4.2 Problem identification and definition

- ❑ The specific problem identified, poor reading literacy because of dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies, has been properly targeted and defined

4.3 Project design

- ❑ The project design was poor but implementation was adequate and demonstrated accountability
- ❑ The project has delivered on its planned activities and objectives promised to the donor organization, the OAS and other stakeholders
- ❑ The project has served its purpose to meet special education needs in AB
- ❑ The project has achieved its two goals: (i) to increase technical skills imparted to people, especially teachers who teach students with reading literacy problems; and (ii) to increase awareness in the general population of AB
- ❑ Project outcome indicators are poor

4.4 Organizational readiness

- ❑ One-person management reflects poor leadership model to manage project with optimum efficiency

4.5 Impact

- ❑ Demonstrable evidence of change: the introduction of training has increased the number of teachers (and other stakeholders) with skills to meet special education needs in literacy in AB
- ❑ Correlation is poor in that the project outcomes do not show the relation between the literacy rate in specific special education circumstances addressed and the number of trained teachers in any given locality in AB.

4.6 Stakeholder Ownership and Involvement

- ❑ To promote understanding and ownership, a strong point in this project's life cycle was its across the board engagement of stakeholders in AB through a participatory process.
- ❑ The project has successfully garnered support amongst various stakeholders, vis-à-vis MOE, teachers, parents, school authorities

4.7 Sustainability

- ❑ Strong inter-institutional cooperation shores up sustainability for total project completion or replication
- ❑ Less dependence on one source of financing increases long-term sustainability of project results

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Project Proposal Document

- ❑ Project design: First, project titles should be as specific as possible. Second, care should be taken to clarify and distinguish project goals (generally more general outcomes), project objectives (generally more specific targets), project indicators and project methodology in the proposal questionnaire format so that proponent countries have a clear understanding of the differences and in that regard, clearly delineate project processes (methodology or strategy to achieve a specific objective), indicators and project goals.
- ❑ Data and information must be of appropriate quantity and quality to project. Country needs to know its baseline conditions, that is, where it stands currently in relation to a given project. Proponents would do well to carry out appropriate surveys
- ❑ Indicators are a necessary part of any project design since they capture change and verify impact. Project proponents and donors should meet to discuss the properties of indicators so projects incorporate them.
- ❑ For a project to be considered “effective” at its close, proponents and project stakeholders and/or ultimate beneficiaries would do well to meet during the project design phase to determine key areas of change envisaged. This is necessary in order to assess progress.

5.2 Project Updates by Monitoring

- ❑ Develop a regular project status-reporting format and frequency that meets needs of donor organization and member countries. By developing a monitoring function, irrespective of the monetary size of the project, regular feedback about how well the program/project is doing is available and project coordinators can take corrective action when and where appropriate.
- ❑ Monitoring enables project proponents and donors to record progress, reformulate indicators if and when necessary and is useful to meet the demands of donors.

5.3 Readiness assessment as a diagnostic too

- ❑ Before project execution, assess where a country's implementing/executing organization stands in relation to a number of critical factors –including organizational roles, responsibilities, and capabilities; incentives for and demands of the project and human resources to shore up implementation efforts; ability of an organization

to sustain the project load as a team effort.

5.4 Capacity building for increased efficiency

- ❑ Review implementing organization's capacity along the following dimensions: technical skills; managerial skills; existence of data systems and institutional experience ---to implement and monitor project as it unfolds.
- ❑ Help identify gaps in capacity needed to build and sustain project results in the country
- ❑ Help build organizational capacity that can be multiplied in country

5.5 Human resources for organizational support

- ❑ Paid professional staff and more interaction of Executive Board to avoid one-person management regimes and cumbersome project management. This should include: a small project team that includes Executive Board members, sector specialists; and at least one member from the MOE.
- ❑ Increased involvement of OAS national office, the MOE and Project Coordinator are necessary for continuous information on project process and to ensure backstopping mechanisms to be put in place and be used, where necessary.

5.6 Inter-institutional Collaboration

- ❑ Collaboration and cross financing between sectors of government, business and civil society must be considered for project sustainability and future support.

5.7 Future OAS Project Support

- ❑ **Continued support is recommended given the following considerations**
 - This project has met an immediate need in AB and serves as a beacon of progress in the area of special education needs to pick up government slack, especially with regards to Dyslexia and dyslexic tendencies in the general primary and post-primary student population.
 - This project has the potential to replicate itself in the OECS and in so doing, strengthen technical and political ties in the Eastern Caribbean.
 - This project needs to add a math literacy component (based on parents' request and island-wide needs) and train trainers to continue to train education practitioners in reading and math literacy for affected students.

- This project has the potential to be a larger program.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The consultant gathered information and data about the projects from a wide array of sources during the evaluation and tested activity-based methodologies to conduct the evaluation. The methodology consists of general information gathering techniques and specific field-based consultation techniques.

Secondary information gathering techniques - pertinent project document and file reviews of selected projects; review of documents related to the context and issues specific to the sector of the project for specific country/countries involved in the project and/or for where project is to be evaluated

Primary information gathering techniques - in-depth conversational (informal) interviews, meetings, group facilitated sessions at OAS headquarters (where necessary and appropriate) and in the field. Beneficiary assessment (BA) will be used in the field. While BA is often used at the identification and design stages of project development, the consultant will adapt this approach to consult with project beneficiaries and other project stakeholders in the field to obtain feedback about the projects and the implementing institutions. BA is an investigation of the perceptions of a systematic sample of beneficiaries and other stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are heard and incorporated in the evaluation and any subsequent policy formulation that might possibly emerge as a positive externality of the project.

A guide of questions for semi-structured interviews will be developed to cover key themes. Information will be collaborative and involve, at different stages of the evaluation process, main parties such as:

The IACD/OAS offices in Washington, DC

Donor institutions

The National Liaison Office (ONE) in the country that implemented the project

The implementing institutions

Project beneficiaries

ANNEX II: Original Goals and Objectives, From ABCDA

A. According to the project document, the general goals of the DLTP are stated to be :

1. To develop through a program of special education, a national Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia program which will enhance and support the educational infrastructure in Antigua and Barbuda and raise literacy standards in schools and society as a whole.
2. To facilitate the transfer of skills by training teachers in dyslexia and literacy techniques to a level that will enable them to undertake the further training of teachers within Antigua and Barbuda and the Eastern Caribbean generally.
3. To raise awareness generally in relation to dyslexia through media campaigns, seminars and training programs and counseling sessions.
4. To provide a hands-on training approach to tutor students with specific literacy problems such as dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies

B. According to the project document, the purpose or specific objective of the DLTP is to establish a Centre in Antigua and Barbuda:

1. To implement a two-year (Diploma) training course in Dyslexia and Literacy comprising a one year part time course leading to Certificate Level followed by a Second year part time Diploma course which will be run concurrently with a second Year 1 Certificate Level course.
2. To facilitate the introduction of these techniques into school programmes.
3. To train teachers to carry out assessments, screening and testing and to advise on the use of practical sources and materials.
4. To implement awareness raising strategies and to plan workshops and awareness raising seminars for the benefit of the general public.
5. To provide a facility comprising a resource center and a library which will be used to implement teaching programs at all levels for persons with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia.
6. To act as a resource body for the Ministry of Education by providing teachers and facilitators trained in special education, more particularly, specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia.
7. Ultimately to provide a self sustaining resource center for the training of teachers and other resource persons within the Eastern Caribbean generally.

ANNEX III: QUESTIONNAIRE 1

1. What is Antigua and Barbuda's educational strategic plan as of the year 2000? Who drafts and approves it?
2. What kinds of testing are done in schools to test reading at all levels of formal schooling?
3. What indicators denote remedial levels of reading in any grade-level peer group?
4. On remedial methods:
 - a) What remedial methods has Antigua and Barbuda used in schools in the last 25 years to redress diagnosed difficulties in reading?
 - b) What methods are being used now?
 - c) Are those methods harmonized throughout the country?
5. What testing was carried out on specific target groups as the basis for requesting and implementing the OAS funded project? What results emerged according to race, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic family group?

ANNEX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE 2

1. What does the ABCDA's baseline data consist of for the target population for which the project was carried out?

- Who specifically was trained?
- What was the person's educational background?
- What was the selection process for people trained?

2. Results achieved

Describe the results of the training for all participant beneficiaries who received training.

- In what way did this training make a difference in the beneficiary's personal and professional life?
- In what way does this project have any impact on the country as a whole?

3. How does the baseline data of the project's participant/beneficiaries differ from before participant/beneficiaries received the training to the point the training was completed for them?

4. Describe the benefits of the training for the participant/beneficiaries.

5. How do the results of the training project relate to the Antigua and Barbuda national context and within that, the regional context in the twin islands and, in the Caribbean in general?

6. What is the relevance of this project in the country and in the region at this time in the country's or the region's economic and social history?

7. Describe the effectiveness of this project.

8. Describe the efficiency of this project.

9. To what extent are the results sustainable in Antigua and Barbuda and in the Caribbean, writ large?

10. Describe the best practices, lessons learned, factors of success, and difficulties that emerge from this training project?

ANNEX V: ABCDA Executive Member During Execution of the Project, 2002-2006

2002-2003

Paula Francis-Spencer - President
Andrea Walter - Vice President
Maureen Derrick - Treasurer
Nicolette Doherty
Maria Hughes
Lenore Watty-Cave
Judith Bramble
Ermina Osoba
Jillia Bird
Desiree Antonio

2003-2004

Paula Francis-Spencer President
Andrea Walter – Vice President
Maureen Derrick –Treasurer
Nicolette Doherty
Maria Hughes
Lenore Watty-Cave
Judith Bramble
Ermina Osoba
Jillia Bird
Desiree Antonio

2004-2005

Paula Francis-Spencer –President
Karen Browne – Vice President
Desiree Antonio
Shirley George-Benjamin
Francine Sothwell
Andrea Walter
Fransene Headley
Joycelyn Palmer- Treasurer
Judith Bramble
Maureen Payne-Hyman

2005-2006

Desiree Antonio –President
Joycelyn Henry-Hampson – Vice President
Lorraine Isaac –Treasurer
Vellie Benta
Jacqueline Butler
Jean Quallis
Ingrid Simon
Viveca Shadrach
Cleo Cooper

N.B. The title of ABCDA Director used extensively in the Evaluation report is non-existent.

Desiree Antonio worked as ABCDA Education Programme Coordinator from November 2003 – August 2006, on secondment from the Ministry of Education during this time.

Both Paula Francis-Spencer and Desiree Antonio were interviewed by the Evaluator Alison Moses on her trip to Antigua & Barbuda in December 2005.

ANNEX VI: Certificate Transcript Example

(The Dyslexia Institute)

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY

Course Transcript

This is the first year of a two-year programme; the first year of study leads to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Dyslexia and literacy. The second year builds on the skills and knowledge and moves teachers on to a Postgraduate Diploma. The aims and objectives, structure, modules and curriculum for the certificate.

Entry requirements

Qualified teacher status or a recognised alternative*

Two years teaching experience (full time equivalent)

A demonstrable personal interest in dyslexia and/or literacy development

Adequate academic potential; existing qualifications to be presented

Good communication skills

- * Speech and language therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Graduates with Montessori Diploma
- FE tutors holding Cert Ed, or equivalent, or City & Guilds 730/7

Exceptional entries are dealt with by the Post-Graduate Board of Studies and must be approved by the University of York subject contact; applicants may be accepted if they lack one of the entry criteria, provided that the others are strong. Other relevant professional qualifications, such as occupational therapy may be considered.

Validation and Accreditation

The Postgraduate Certificate is validated by the University of York, one of the UK's leading universities and home to one of the best-regarded reading difficulties research units in Europe.

The Postgraduate Certificate is also accredited by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) at Approved Teacher Status (ATS) level. This is a professional quality mark. Re-accreditation has to be applied for every four years.

Aims

The aims of the Post-Graduate Certificate are:

To give teachers knowledge of the research literature relevant to the theory and practice of dyslexia, and the relationship between theory and practice.

To provide teachers with knowledge of a range of teaching and learning processes, particularly as they apply to literacy, and to students with dyslexia.

To encourage teachers to develop habits of critical thinking, reflective practice and informed enquiry.

To introduce a range of effective teaching and teacher assessment skills relevant to the needs of students with dyslexia and others who may be underachieving in literacy.

To work with course members and stakeholders, such as Local Education Authorities, Heads of independent schools, and specialist dyslexia centres, to identify targets that will inform the precise learning objectives of each individual within the overall programme.

Objectives

After successfully completing the course teachers will be able to:

- observe and describe accurately the needs of students who fail to acquire competent standards in basic skills.
- combine attainment test results, history taking and observation to make a professional assessment of an individual's learning needs.
- plan, deliver and evaluate an appropriate intervention based on assessment and observations.
- adopt suitable and constructive approaches for their students.
- use relevant technical aids to teaching, including ICT.
- write a clear and concise report, on both assessment and teaching, for a variety of possible clients.
- work with teachers and other professionals to plan and implement literacy improvement programmes for individuals and groups

It will be noted that the aims and objectives are broadly similar to those of the Diploma Course, though the issues will be tackled in greater depth at Diploma level.

Course structure

The course can be delivered in three ways: by weekly attendance, for UK based students, by distance learning, or by a combination of a Summer School and Distance Learning for those based overseas.

The Antiguan students attended a one-week Induction Course in May 2005, at which reading assignments and coursework were set, to be ready for the beginning of the Summer School, on 4 July and the audiotapes, notepads and workbooks were issued.

The Summer School ran for three weeks, with students attending from 8 30 - 3 00, on Monday to Friday, and carrying out assignments each evening. The course day consisted of lectures, workshops, live one-to-one teaching practice, group discussions and practical work. Students also spent one session each day listening to a tape and discussing it as a group with a tutor present.

Assessment of a student and teaching skill were each assessed once during the Summer School, and the students attended the student conference delivered by the Diploma students, on the final day.

Following the Summer School, the students had to listen to the rest of the tapes and work through the tasks in the workbooks. They were set coursework assignments, to be carried out in consultation by e-mail with their tutors in the UK. They are encouraged to participate in local support group meetings under the auspices of ABCDA.

[The deadline for final submission of coursework assignments is 1 March 2006.]

Curriculum

Overview

The program is introduced by a module on the structure of spoken and written language, to educate teachers in the core knowledge about language that will enable them to evaluate and use structured literacy programmes. We have found that teachers, especially those under the age of about 45, have not had formal training in grammar and spelling in their own education; the structure of spoken language is the domain of the linguistics student, or the speech and language therapist.

The psychology core introduces the key theories about literacy, literacy acquisition and literacy difficulties, particularly dyslexia.

The education curriculum aims to relate the theory of literacy learning, with particular reference to literacy difficulties, to the needs of individual pupils and how they may be ascertained and met by a teaching programme. The course materials are designed to teach principles, illustrated by examples, and to encourage students to experiment and to reflect critically on their current and their newly-acquired practice.

The assessment module introduces the principles of assessment and their

application to literacy assessment.

Specialist literacy teaching allows the student to apply the principles learned in the preceding modules to the teaching situation. Students learn how to use and adapt literacy teaching programmes with a range of pupils.

Module 1

THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

A) SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Development of spoken language

Structure of spoken language

Language as communication

Basic phonetics and phonology

Prosody

B) WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Etymology

Spelling rules

Rules of written grammar

Punctuation

Sentence structure and analysis

Module 2

PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION CORE

A) PSYCHOLOGY

THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Scientific values. Rejection of dogma. Specialist teaching skills relevant to non-dyslexics.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

What is dyslexia? The contrast view of the matter. New definitions. The term no longer synonymous with, but a subset of, specific learning difficulties.

MEMORY AND ATTENTION

Models of memory – episodic, semantic, declarative. Working memory: phonological and visuospatial stores. Naming, lexical access.

VARIETIES OF DEVELOPMENT

Development of phonological and phonemic awareness. Wider linguistic factors and the phonological deficit hypothesis.

OTHER THEORIES OF DYSLEXIA

Two “grand” theories of dyslexia. Fawcett and Nicolson integrate their automaticity theory with a cerebellar hypothesis to produce an inclusive account that explains phonological and other phenomena; John Stein’s

magnocellular theory proposes a perceptual basis, both visual and auditory, for dyslexia.

EDUCATION

The education core consists of a list of topics to be covered, and a cluster of cross- subject strands that run through all the topics on the list.

Topics:

Principles of specialist literacy teaching
Phonological awareness
Motivation, behavior, talents, self-esteem
Basic level reading – word attack
Basic level reading - comprehension
Basic level spelling
Basic level writing
Perceptual skills
Memory
Attention and listening
Motor skills and handwriting
Sequencing
Spoken language difficulties
Vocabulary and word-finding

Strands:

Linking theory and practice
Adapting to age, ability, strengths and difficulties
Learning styles and strategies
Structured, multisensory teaching
Thinking skills
National Literacy Strategy, National Numeracy Strategy, SEN Code of Practice
ICT

Module 3

ASSESSMENT

1. PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Why measure? Levels of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval). Psychometrics: the measurement of abilities. Normative, criterion-referenced and ipsative assessment. Some meanings of scores. Three domains of measurement: general ability, attainment and diagnostic tests.

2. SOME STATISTICS

Test construction and use, standardization and development. Interpretation of results (transformation of scores). The normal distribution. Statistical terminology: mean, standard deviation, percentile, standard score, z-score. Calculation of a standard deviation. Interpretation guided by qualified standard scores.

3. MEASUREMENT IN PRACTICE

Reliability and validity. The concept of measurement error. Calculation of confidence intervals. The importance of general cognitive ability: IQ and ability testing. Factor analysis. Analysing underachievement.

4. COGNITIVE ASSESMENT

The logic of the investigation. Assembly and presentation of scores. Visual presentation of a profile of scores. Interpreting test scores: patterns of abilities and difficulties, contrasts between classes of test, test profiles.

5. ADAPTING THE MODEL FOR TEACHERS

Choice of tests for teachers. Assessment of general ability; information efficiency; reading, spelling, writing, number. How (and why) to administer, score and interpret specific tests (BPVS-II, PhAB, NARA-2, WRAT-3). Interpreting the educational psychologist's report.

Module 4

SPECIALIST LITERACY TEACHING

1. TEACHING PLANNING

Application of the principles to the teaching situation

Placement of pupil on programme

Lesson planning

2. TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Using a structured learning programme (Units of Sound or DILP Basic Literacy)

Appropriate incorporation of other skill teaching (e.g. memory, handwriting)

Selection, production and appropriate use of a range of teaching resources

3. FLEXIBILITY AND CREATIVITY

Adaptation of the programme to age, ability, strengths and difficulties

Management of learning through the programme

Adaptation to emerging needs

4. EVALUATION

Assessment of progress and effectiveness

Constructive self-evaluation

Janet Townend

Head of Training

September 2005

ANNEX VII: Diploma Transcript

(The Dyslexia Institute)

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY

Course Transcript

This is the second year of a two year programme; the first year of study leads to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Dyslexia and literacy. The second year builds on the skills and knowledge and moves teachers on to a Postgraduate Diploma. The entry requirements, validation status, aims and objectives, structure, modules and curriculum are set out below.

Entry requirements

Entry to the second year of the programme, which leads to a Post-Graduate Diploma is subject to successful completion of the Post-Graduate Certificate.

Validation and Accreditation

The Post-Graduate Diploma is validated by the University of York, one of the UK's leading universities and home to one of the best-regarded reading difficulties research units in Europe.

The course is also accredited by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) at Associate Member (AMBDA) level. This is a professional quality mark. Re-accreditation has to be applied for every four years.

Aims

1. The main aim of the programme is to train teachers to be informed, highly skilled practitioners in the field of literacy, and literacy difficulties, who will spread good practice in their schools, for the better education of dyslexic students and others.
2. To give teachers broad knowledge of the research literature relevant to the theory and practice of dyslexia and literacy.
3. To provide teachers with detailed and critical knowledge of a range of teaching and learning processes, particularly as they apply to students with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties.
4. To develop to a high level the teachers' understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.
5. To create an environment in which teachers can develop habits of critical thinking, reflective practice and disciplined enquiry,
6. To discuss a range of effective teaching and assessment skills relevant to the needs of students with dyslexia.
7. To promote an appreciation of the wider aspects of dyslexia and other

specific learning difficulties in relation to social and behavioral skills, and educational management, in the context of the National Curriculum, the National Literacy Strategy and the Code of Practice.

8. To work with course members and stakeholders (such as LEAs) to identify targets that will inform the precise learning objectives of each individual within the overall programme.

Objectives

After successfully completing the programme of study, teachers will be able to:

- observe and assess accurately the needs of students who fail to acquire competent standards in basic skills.
- select and administer appropriate tests, analyze the results and combine them with history taking and observation to make a professional assessment of an individual's learning needs.
- plan, deliver and evaluate an appropriate intervention based on systematically derived measurements and observations.
manage other teachers and learning support assistants in the delivery of appropriate teaching programmes.
- adopt suitable and constructive approaches for dyslexic students.
- demonstrate a high level of competence in the use of relevant technical aids to teaching, including ICT.
- Understand the legal, professional, psychological, scientific and political issues surrounding dyslexia and other special educational needs.
- Plan and implement strategies for literacy improvement and/or special educational needs provision within educational institutions.
- Write a clear, concise and technically accurate report, to high professional standards, on both assessment and teaching, for a variety of possible clients, including examination boards.
- Demonstrate good communication skills in addressing different audiences, presenting seminars and interacting in groups of fellow-professionals.
- Act as consultants, for instance to fellow teachers, on any aspect of literacy and literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.
- Provide appropriate advice, based on accepted research findings, to parents and teachers on the proper provision to be made for an individual or, where appropriate, on the need for a more detailed

psychological or other assessment.

Course structure

The course can be delivered in two ways: by weekly attendance, for UK based students, or by a combination of a Summer School and Distance Learning for those based overseas. There is a Summer School held in the UK for those who cannot attend a weekly course day.

The Antiguan students attended a one-week Induction Course in May 2005, at which reading assignments and coursework were set, to be ready for the beginning of the Summer School, on 4 July.

The Summer School ran for three weeks, with students attending from 8 30 - 3 00, on Monday to Friday, and carrying out assignments each evening. The course day consisted of lectures, workshops, live one-to-one teaching practice, group discussions and practical work.

Teaching skill was assessed once during the Summer School, and each student delivered a seminar on a dyslexia-related topic of her choice at a student conference on the final day.

Following the Summer School, the students were set coursework assignments, to be carried out in consultation by e-mail with their tutors in the UK. They are encouraged to participate in local support group meetings under the auspices of ABCDA.

Additional reading is set during this period, and additional material is sent for distance learning study, developing topics that were introduced during the Summer School.

[The deadline for final submission of coursework assignments is 1 March 2006.]

SUMMARY OF MODULES, CREDITS, ASSIGNMENTS AND MARKS FOR THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA:

Postgraduate Diploma Curriculum

EDUCATION 2

Advanced reading skills
Higher level spelling rules and strategies
Extending spoken language
Extending writing
Thinking skills
Memory and the organisation of learning
Numeracy
Teaching adults
The young child

STRANDS (running through all topics in both years)

Linking theory and practice
Adapting to age, ability, strengths, difficulties
Learning styles and strategies
Structured, multisensory teaching
Thinking skills
ICT

ADVANCED SPECIALIST TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

AST TOPICS:

Interpretation of assessment
Using a structured multisensory literacy programme**
The Dyslexia Institute Literacy Programme, Teaching Point 51- end
Selecting an appropriate literacy programme
Constructing a teaching programme
Extending work from the literacy programme
Adaptation to age, ability and difficulties (2)
Selection, production and appropriate use of a wide range of teaching resources
The Active Literacy Kit
Literacy for Study and Work
** Trainees learn the programme not covered in their first year of study, and use it in teaching practice.

ASSESSMENT TOPICS:

Strategies for choosing, administering and evaluating the results of tests.
The Matrix Analogies Test Short Form, the Symbol Digit Modalities Test, the Digit Memory Test, Sound Linkage Test and Kirklees Tests.
How to display data in graphical form.
The issue of subtypes.
The continuum of severity; the Dyslexia Index.
Writing the assessment report.
The Case Study.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES AND RELATED TOPICS

National Curriculum
Literacy and SEN issues in your country
Dyslexia in the Classroom
Management of Special Educational Needs provision
The wider role of the specialist teacher
Continuing Professional Development for teachers
Models of reading and spelling
Interpersonal aspects of dyslexia
Biological issues
Legal and administrative issues
Other Specific Learning Difficulties.

Janet Townend,
Head of Training
September 2005

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